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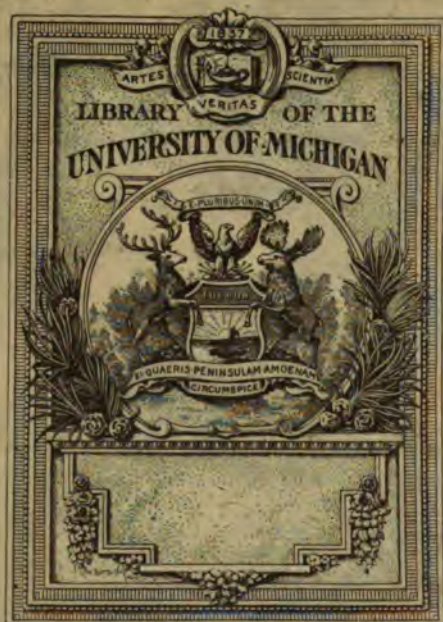
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THE EXPOSITOR.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Book of Job is admitted, with hardly a dissentient voice, to be the most sublime religious Poem in the literature of the world. Divines and expositors, who have studied it with devotion, find it difficult to express their sense of its beauty, grandeur, and value. Thus, for example, Canon Cook—one of its most recent, sober, and able commentators—writes :—" It combines in a very singular degree various elements of human thought and most opposite characteristics of human genius. Its most striking features are depth and boldness of speculative inquiry, of research, not only into what may be known of the dealings of God with man, but of the principles on which those dealings rest. The characters stand out, each and all, in broad strong outline, with traits of surpassing delicacy and vigour. The historical narrative is clear and rapid, with the simplicity and grace of antique letters ; the dialogues full of vehement outbursts, vivid imagery, and sudden alternations of passionate struggles with deep, calm, earnest contemplation of spiritual truth. The reader is irresistibly impressed with the reality of the transactions, with the truth and naturalness of the

feelings brought into play, while he recognizes in the construction of the plot, and the gradual unfolding of the design, the work of a master spirit, guided, whether consciously or with the sure instinct of genius, by those principles in which the highest art and the most perfect nature meet and are reconciled."

Nor is it divines and expositors alone who have been fascinated by the spell of this sublime Poem. It is hardly possible to speak of it to an educated and thoughtful man who does not acknowledge its extraordinary power, its unrivalled excellence; while men of genius, to whom the greatest works of literature in many languages are familiar, are forward to confess that it stands alone, far above the head of all other and similar performance. Thus, Thomas Carlyle, our greatest living author, who can hardly be suspected of any clerical bias or prepossessions, says of this Book:¹ "I call that, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or noble sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble Book; all men's Book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending Problem,—man's destiny, and God's way with him here in this earth. And all in such free flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity; in its epic melody and repose of reconciliation. There is the seeing eye, the mildly understanding heart. So *true* every way; true eyesight and vision for all things; material things no less than spiritual. . . . Such

¹ "Lectures on Heroes"—"The Hero as Prophet."

living likenesses were never since drawn. Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation ; oldest choral melody as of the heart of mankind :—so soft and great ; as the summer midnight, as the world with its seas and stars ! *There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit."*

And yet this grand Poem is comparatively little read, and, even where it is read, it is but very imperfectly grasped and understood. Nor is it easy to read it with intelligence and a clear vigorous conception of its meaning. It abounds in allusions to ancient modes of thought and speculation ; its long sequences of thought and its quick cogent dialectic are disguised and obscured, in part, by the limitations of the proverbial form in which it is composed, and, in part, by the inevitable imperfections which cleave to translations of any and every kind, even the best. And while there are many able commentaries on it addressed to scholars, I know of only one—Canon Cook's in "The Speaker's Commentary"—from which the ordinary reader would be likely to derive much help ; while even that, owing to the conditions under which it was written, leaves much to be desired. Yet there is no reason, in the Poem itself, why it should not be as well and intimately known, even to readers of the most limited education, as any one of Shakespeare's plays, and no reason why it should not become far more precious and instructive. That it is difficult to translate is true ; but Renan has rendered it into the most exquisite French with admirable felicity and force. That every Chapter of it is studded with allusions which need to be explained, and that the argument of the

Book needs to be "exposed" and emphasized, is also true; but both these services have been rendered to scholars by a crowd of commentators, in the front rank of which stand such men as Schultens, Ewald, Schlottmann, Delitzsch, Dillmann, Merx, Renan, Godet, and Professor A. B. Davidson; and it surely cannot be impossible that the results of their labours, and of labours similar to theirs, should be given to the public in a popular and convenient form.

To achieve some such task as this—to make the Book of Job readable, intelligible, enjoyable to all who care to acquaint themselves with it, even though they should be familiar with none but our noble mother-tongue—has long been a cherished aim with me. Three times during the last ten years I have revised my translation of the Poem, seeking to make it less and less unworthy of the Original; and at intervals, during those years, I have sought to acquaint myself with the best expositions of it published in Germany, England, France, and America. Thus equipped and prepared, I venture to offer the results of my reading and labour to the readers of THE EXPOSITOR.

What I have aimed and tried to do is simply this :
(1) To give a translation of the Poem somewhat more clear and accurate than that of our Authorized Version, and, in especial, a translation which should render the Poet's long lines, or sweeps, of consecutive thought more apparent. The Book belongs, as we shall see, to that class of Hebrew literature which is collectively designated the *Chokmah*, and is therefore composed in one of the most inflexible of literary forms,—the *proverbial*. At first sight it

would seem utterly incredible that a mere succession of proverbs should prove an adequate instrument for expressing any of the grander and more harmonious conceptions of the human mind, above all for expressing linked sequences of thought long drawn out. But there is absolutely no literary form which does not prove flexible and elastic in the hands of genius. In the very "Book of Proverbs" itself the famous description of "Wisdom"¹ shews what even the proverb is capable of in the hands of a master.² And the Book of Job is written by a hand more free and masterly than that of Solomon himself. At times, no doubt, the contracting influence of the inferior form is obvious, breaking up the train of thought into brief pictorial sentences, each of which has a certain rounded completeness in itself; but at other times, and even as a rule I think,

¹ Proverbs viii.

² It should not be forgotten that our Lord, adopting the style of his age and of the teachers of his native land, spake in proverbs, and in parables, which are but expanded proverbs. The ease with which He speaks hides from us his immense intellectual force, and a certain reverence, not always wise in the forms it assumes, often makes us shrink from discussing the intellectual claims of One whom we confess to be God as well as man. But if we would form an adequate and complete conception of Him, we must, with whatever modesty and reverence, reflect on his enormous, his immeasurable, superiority to all other Teachers in mental power. That He should use so inflexible an instrument of expression as the proverb and make it flexible is no slight proof of his wisdom and intellectual force. But it is only as we compare his "sayings," and especially his paradoxes, which are usually in the gnomic form, with the sayings of the masters of human wisdom that we are sufficiently impressed with the range and grasp of his mind. A foot-note is not the place for a dissertation, or it would be easy to institute a comparison between the proverbial and parabolic utterances of our Lord and those of the wisest of the ancients and moderns. Take only one or two suggestive illustrations. Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" has won a secure place as a masterpiece of allegory by the suffrages of the best literary judges; but if our Lord

the thought triumphs over the form, subdues it to its own more imperious necessities, gnome is linked to gnome by connections more or less subtle, so that protracted and noble sequences of argument or description are fairly wrought out. This characteristic feature of the style of the Poem I have endeavoured to preserve.

(2) Another aim has been to supply such explanations, or illustrations, of the innumerable allusions to the physical phenomena of the East, to Oriental modes of thought and philosophy, to the customs and manners of human life in the antique world, with which the Poem abounds, as a modern reader of the Western world may require; in short, so to annotate the Poem as that an Englishman of ordinary intelligence and culture may be able, not only to read it without difficulty, but to enter into and enjoy the large and crowded picture of a by-gone age which it presents.

had taken up the allegory, would He not have compressed it into a few sentences, without omitting any point of real value? and, beautiful as Bunyan's work is, will it for a moment compare with any one of the Parables considered even as a mere work of literary genius and art? Or, to come from parables to mere sayings, or guesses. Lord Bacon has many fine "sentences." Schiller's saying, "Death is an universal, and *therefore* cannot be an evil," has won much applause. Of the merit of Goethe's, "Do the duty that lies nearest to thee," Carlyle is never weary of insisting; and Carlyle himself has many compressed and noble sentences charged with a weight of meaning. But if we compare with these any of our Lord's sayings, such as, for example, "If a man will save his life, let him lose it;" or, "Let him that would be greatest among you serve,"—who does not feel that we rise at once into an immeasurably larger and deeper world of thought? The very way in which He quotes might be adduced as another proof of his extraordinary and unparalleled intellectual force; as when, for example, He takes the answer to the question, "Which is the first and best commandment?" from the lips of the Rabbis, and resolves it at once, from the correct answer of a legal puzzle, into a practical moral code which covers the whole of human life.

(3) And, above all, it has been my aim to lift the reader to the height of the great argument of the Poem, to articulate the processes of thought veiled, or half veiled, by its proverbial forms, to trace out the infinite variety of fluctuating spiritual moods which pulse through and animate it. There is far more logic, as also far more of dramatic power, in the colloquies of the Book than we are apt to see in them, in the speeches of the Friends and the replies of Job. To bring out its logical connections, to expound *the argument* of the Poem, to follow it through all its windings to their several issues and to shew how they all contribute to its triumphant close, has been my main endeavour.

On the other hand while I am not conscious of having shirked a single difficulty, while I have tried to escape the censure which Young pronounced on those commentators who—

“ each dark passage shun,
And hold a farthing candle to the sun,”

I have not enumerated the readings, renderings, explanations of all who have gone before me, though I have considered most of them before arriving at my own conclusions. It is the vice of recent commentators, especially in Germany, that they comment on each other rather than on the Sacred Text, and so produce works too tedious for mortal patience to endure. Moreover, by piling up commentary on commentary, they are apt more and more to get off the perpendicular, to draw apart from and perilously lean over the real facts of human life and experience, till there is much danger that the whole structure will come toppling to the

ground. If, when we have them in our hands, any should ask us what we read, we should have to reply, with Hamlet, "Words, words, words!" and little but words. What we want in these busy and over-busy days are expositions in which each man will give us his own conclusions based on his own study of the Word, and not his refutation of the conclusions at which his predecessors or rivals have arrived. And if any credit be conceded me, I hope it will not be that I have compiled a catena of opinions, or shewn how great a variety of meanings may be extracted from a single passage by scholars who seek to raise their own reputation on the torn and tarnished reputations of the scholars who preceded them, or by proving that they too can—

"Torture one poor word ten thousand ways ;"

but that I have tried to bring the words of Scripture straight to the facts of human experience, and sought to interpret the former by the latter. As a rule I have simply given my own reading and my own interpretation—for which, however, I have often been indebted to the labours of others : only when the passage was exceptionally difficult, or important, have I asked the reader to consider the best readings or interpretations which differ from my own, that he might have the means of judging and determining the question for himself.

I do not propose to open my exposition with a long and elaborate Introduction ; valuable essays and dissertations on the Book are easily accessible, and may be found in the works of any of the commentators named on a previous page : but a few words

on the date and origin, the scene, and, above all, the problem of the Book are indispensable.

As to the *Date* and *Origin* of the Poem nothing can be safely inferred—though on this point some scholars lay great stress—from the Aramæan words which are frequently employed in it; and that, not simply because the Aramæisms occur chiefly in the speech of Elihu, and are appropriate in his mouth, since he himself was an Aramæan; nor simply because all Hebrew poetry, of whatever age, is more or less Aramaic: but also and mainly because the presence of Aramæan words in any Scripture may indicate either its extreme antiquity or its comparatively modern date. For these Aramæisms—as “Rabbi” Duncan tersely puts the conclusion of all competent scholars—are either “(1) late words borrowed from intercourse with the Syrians, or (2) early ones common to both dialects.” Any argument, therefore, which is based on the use of these words cuts both ways.

Nor, I think, do the other arguments commonly adduced on this point carry much weight, with the exception of one, which is so weighty as to be conclusive. Both the pervading tone of the Book and its literary style point steadily and unmistakably to the age of Solomon as the period in which it, at least, assumed the form in which it has come down to us. That which first impresses a thoughtful reader of the Poem is the noble universality which Carlyle found in it, “as if it were not Hebrew.” Although it is part of the Hebrew Bible, it is catholic in its tone and spirit. The persons who figure in it are not Jews; the scene

is laid beyond the borders of Palestine ; the worship we see practised in it is that of the patriarchal age : it does not contain a single allusion to the Mosaic laws or customs, or to the characteristic belief of the Jews, or to the recorded events of their national history. Hence many have concluded that it was written in the patriarchal age ; by Moses, perhaps, before he was called to be the redeemer and law-giver of his people, or by some Temanite or Idumean poet, whose work was afterwards translated into the Hebrew tongue. But to this conclusion there is, I think, at least one fatal objection—the literary form of the Poem, the *proverbial* form, decisively marks it out as one of the Chokmah books, and forbids us to ascribe it to any age earlier than that of Solomon.

It is beyond dispute that in his age, and under the influence of his commanding genius, a new kind of literature—new in spirit, new in form—came into vogue ; of which we have some noble samples in the Book of Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, many of the Psalms, and several of the Apocryphal Books. They are characterized by a catholic and universal spirit new in Hebrew literature, and might, one thinks, have been written by the sages and poets of almost any of the leading Oriental races. This non-Hebraic catholic tone, which differentiates them from the other Hebrew Scriptures, was doubtless but one out of many results of the enlarged commerce with the great heathen world which commenced in the reign of David. During his reign the Hebrew Commonwealth entered into new and wider relations—political, mercantile, literary—

with many of the nobler and more cultivated races of antiquity, which bore fruit in the reign of his son. In the court of Solomon there grew up, as Godet has pointed out, a school of *wisdom*, or of moral philosophy, which set itself to search more deeply into the knowledge of things human and divine. "Beneath the Israelite they tried to find the man; beneath the Mosaic system, that universal principle of the moral law of which it is an expression. Thus they reached to that idea of *wisdom* which is the common feature of the three books, Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes; of the wisdom whose delight is not in the Jews only, but in the *children of men*." This endeavour to humanize Judaism, to spiritualize the precepts of Moses, "to reach that fundamental stratum of moral being in which the Jewish law and the human conscience find their unity," is the distinctive "note" of the Chokmah literature.

And if the spirit, the ruling moral tone, of this literature is novel and original, so also is the form which its noblest productions assumed, viz., the proverbial, or parabolic. To utter ethical wisdom in portable and picturesque sentences, the wise saying often being wrought out into a little parable or poem complete in itself, was the task in which the leading minds of the Solomonic era took delight. We have only to compare their peculiar mode of expression—its weighty sententiousness, its conscious elaboration of metaphor, its devotion to literary feats and dexterities, and, in singular combination with these, its thoughtful handling of the moral problems which tax and oppress the thoughts of men, with "the lyrical cry" of many of the Psalmists of Israel, in

order to become aware of the marked and immense difference between the two.

Job belongs to the *Chokmah* both in spirit and in form. Its noble and catholic tone of thought finds admirable expression in the graphic yet weighty gnomes of which it is for the most part composed. And as it is beyond all comparison the most perfect and original specimen of the *Chokmah* school, we can hardly refer it to any age but that of Solomon, in which that school arose and in which it also achieved its most signal triumphs. This conclusion is confirmed by the admitted fact that "the Book of Job bears a far closer affinity in style and in modes of thought" to the Book of Proverbs than to any other portion of the Old Testament Scriptures.

It does not follow, however, that the Book of Job is a mere poem, a mere work of imagination, produced in the age to which the genius of Solomon gave its special character and form. If, on the one hand, it is impossible to take the Book as a literal story of events which transpired in the patriarchal age, if we must admit that the Story has passed through the shaping imagination of some unknown poet; on the other hand, it is, as Renan remarks, quite as impossible to believe that any poet of Solomon's age should have thrown himself back into an age so distant, and have maintained the tone of it throughout. Such a feat has never been achieved; such a feat was wholly foreign to the spirit of the time. We must admit, therefore, that the Poem had an historical basis; that it embalms a veritable chronicle; that a man named Job really lived and suffered—lived and suffered, moreover, in the times of the

Patriarchs, since all the allusions of the Poem point to that age.

The most probable hypothesis of the date and origin of the Book, and that to which nearly all competent judges lend the weight of their authority, is, in short, that the story of Job, of his sufferings and his patience, was handed down by tradition from patriarchal times, through every succeeding generation, till, in the age of Solomon, at once the most catholic and the most literary period of Hebrew history, a gifted and inspired poet threw the tradition into the splendid dramatic form in which we now possess it. Just as the heroic deeds of the wandering Ulysses were recited by and preserved in the memories of the trained bards, or rhapsodists, of Greece for centuries, and at last took shape on the lips of the man called Homer or of the *gens* called Homêrids, but were only reduced to their present form and written down in the age of Pisis-tratus ; so, I suspect, the story of Job was passed from lip to lip among the Abrahamides, and from memory to memory, growing in volume and in beauty as it went, till, in the literary age of Solomon, the Poet arose who gave it its final and most perfect form, and wrote it down for the edification and delight of all who should come after him.

As for the *Scene* of the Story, history and tradition combine with all the indications contained in the Poem itself to place it in the *Hauran*. On the east of the Jordan, in that strange, lovely, and fertile volcanic region which stretches down from Syria to Idumea, there is every reason to believe

that Job dwelt, and suffered, and died ; and in the upper part of it, north of Edom, north even of Moab, within easy reach of Damascus itself. The Arabs who live in this district to-day claim it as "the land of Job." The whole district, moreover, is full of sites and ruins which Tradition connects with his name. And it fulfils all the conditions of the Poem. The personages of the Story, for example, are admitted to be without exception descendants of Abraham—not through Isaac and Jacob, but through Ishmael, or Esau, or the sons of Keturah ; and it was in this great belt of volcanic land, stretching down from Damascus to Idumea, that most of these Abrahamides found their homes. On the east, too, the Hauran is bordered by "the desert," out of which came the great wind which smote the four corners of the house of Job's first-born. To this day it is rich in the very kinds of wealth of which Job was possessed, and is exposed to raids similar to those which deprived him of his wealth as in a moment. It presents, moreover, both the same natural features, being especially "for miles together a complete network of deep gorges,"—the wadys or valleys, whose treacherous streams the Poet describes, and the same singular combination of civic and rural life which is assumed throughout the Book. Even the fact that the robber-bands, which fell upon the ploughing oxen of Job and smote the ploughmen with the edge of the sword, came from the distant rocks of Petra, and that the bands which carried off his camels came from the distant plains of Chaldea, point to the same conclusion. For, probably, Job had entered into compacts with the

nearer tribes of the marauders, as the chiefs of the Hauran do to this day, paying them an annual tax, or mail, to buy off their raids, and was surprised by those remote freebooters just as to this day the Hauranites are often pillaged by freebooting tribes from the neighbourhood of Babylon.

I take it, then, that we may with much reason conceive of Job as living, during the remote patriarchal age, amid the fertile plains of the Hauran—so fertile that even now its wheat (“Batanæan wheat,” as it is called) “is always at least twenty-five per cent. higher in price than other kinds,”—with its deep wadys and perfidious streams, the volcanic mountains rising on the horizon, and the wide sandy desert lying beyond them.

The *Problem* of the Book is not one, but manifold, and is not, therefore, easy to determine. No doubt, the Poet intended to vindicate the ways of God with men. No doubt, therefore, he had passed through and beyond that early stage of religious faith in which the heart simply and calmly assumes the perfect goodness of God, and had become aware that some justification of the Divine ways was demanded by the doubt and anguish of the human heart. The heavy and the weary weight of the mystery which shrouds the providence of God, the burden of this unintelligible world, was obviously making itself profoundly felt. There are many indications in the Poem itself that the age in which it took form was one of transition, one of growing scepticism; that the current beliefs were being called in question, that men could no longer be content

with the moral and theological conceptions which had satisfied the world's grey fathers. More than once, when he is passionately challenging the orthodox assertions of the Friends, Job seems to be giving utterance to misgivings which had struck coldly into his heart even while he still sunned himself in the unclouded favour of God. From the attitude assumed by Elihu, moreover, we may infer that the younger men of the time had already thought out for themselves a broader and more generous theology than that of their elders, and were not a little puzzled how to state it without giving them offence. And yet, though it proceeds on the lines just indicated, the popular conception of the Problem of this Book is not an adequate one; it fails to satisfy some of the leading conditions of the Story. That conception, which Mr. Froude, in his "Essay on Job," has eloquently expressed, is that both Job and his Friends had assumed prosperity to be the invariable concomitant, or result, of righteousness, and adversity to be the no less invariable consequence of sin; and that Job was afflicted, although his righteousness was attested by God Himself, in order to shew that this interpretation of Providence was inadequate and partial, that it did not cover, and could not be stretched to cover, all the facts of human life. Those who have read Mr. Froude's charming Essay will not easily forget the force and humour with which he describes the endeavour of the Friends to stretch the old formula and make it cover the new fact, until it cracked and broke in their hands, and, in its rebound, smote them to the earth.¹ And there is

¹ I must not be understood to imply, however, that Mr. Froude adopts the popular conception. He is far too acute a critic to miss the true Problem of this great Poem.

much truth in this conception, though not the whole truth. Unquestionably the Book of Job does shew, in the most tragic and pathetic way, that good, no less than wicked, men lie open to the most cruel losses and sorrows ; that these losses and sorrows are not always signs of the Divine anger against sin ; that they are intended to correct and perfect the righteousness of the righteous,—or, in our Lord's figure, that they are designed to purge the trees which already bear good fruit, in order that they may bring forth more fruit.

But, after all, can it be the main and ruling intention of the Book to teach us that noble lesson ? When we follow the Story to its close, do we not see that “the Lord gave to Job twice as much as he had before” ? And, might we not fairly infer from the Story, as a whole, that the formula of Job's Friends was not so much too narrow as it is commonly held to be ? that it might very easily be stretched till it covered the new fact ? that where they were wrong was in assuming that happy outward conditions are the *immediate* result of obeying the Divine Law, and miserable outward conditions the *immediate* result of violating that Law ? that, had they only affirmed that *in the long run* righteousness always conducts a man to prosperity and sin to adversity, they would have been sufficiently near the mark ?

Even in our own day, Mr. Matthew Arnold—not a bigot surely, nor at all disposed to stand up for theological dogmas against verified facts—has affirmed and argued for this very conception : he has affirmed and re-affirmed it to be well-nigh impossible to escape the conviction that “the stream of tendency” is in

favour of those who do well and adverse to those who do ill. And though some of us might word the proposition differently, yet he would betray a singular dulness or hardihood who should venture to question the main tenour and drift of it. The facts of history, experience, consciousness, compel us to believe that, *in the long run*,—though we may admit that the run is often very long, and that we do not see the end of it here—happy and auspicious conditions are vouchsafed to men, or to nations, who follow after righteousness, while those who walk in unrighteousness are overtaken by miserable and inauspicious conditions. Job was righteous. Did he suffer for his righteousness? Nay, but rather he suffered that he might be made more righteous; that he might learn to trust in God when all things were against him, when even God Himself seemed to be against him, as well as when all things went to his mind; he suffered in order that he might learn *that his very righteousness was not his own* in any sense which would warrant him in claiming it and in taking his stand upon it as against God: and, when he was thus stablished and perfected in righteousness, the stream of prosperity flowed back upon him in double tide.

We cannot, therefore, accept the popular conception of the meaning and intention of this great Poem as adequate and satisfactory. There is a higher and a far more gracious meaning in it, which rules and over-rules this lower meaning: and this higher intention is expressly stated in the Prologue. When the Poem opens Job stands before us “perfect,” *i.e.* single-hearted and sincere, without duplicity or hypocrisy—and “upright,” fearing God and eschewing

evil. He is an Arab sheikh, or chieftain, of immense wealth, the richest as well as the best and wisest man of his race :

“ A creature such
As to seek through the regions of the earth
For one his like, there would be something failing
In him that should compare. I do not think
So fair an outward and such stuff within
Endows a man but he.”

He is the priest of his family, if not of his clan. Unconscious of iniquity in himself, fearing nothing for his sons but that in the gaiety of their hearts they may have momentarily forgotten God, he nevertheless offers a weekly sacrifice in atonement of their possible sins. Over and around this good man, standing full in the sunshine, the dark clouds gather and roll ; the lightnings leap out and strike down all that he has, all that he loves : for many days neither sun nor stars appear, the tempest beats him down till all hope that he will be saved seems taken away ; but, at last, the clouds clear off, the sun shines forth with redoubled splendour, and we leave him a wealthier, better, wiser man than he was even at the first.

Now if we could see nothing but the earth on which he stood, and the sky which alternately frowned and smiled above his head, we might be unable to seize the moral and intention of the scene ; we might reasonably doubt whether the Poem was designed to teach us more than that, as righteousness conducts men to prosperity, so a tried and constant righteousness conducts them to a more stable and a more ample prosperity. But a door is opened into Heaven, and we are

permitted to enter and "assist" at a celestial divan, a council to which God summons all the ministers of his kingly state. The King sits on the throne; his ministers gather round him and sit in session: among them appears a spirit, here simply named the "Adversary," or the "Accuser," whose function is to scrutinize the actions of men, to present them in their worst aspect, that they may be thoroughly sifted and explored. He himself has sunk into an evil condition, for he delights in making even good men seem bad, in fitting good deeds with evil motives. Self is his centre, not God; and he suspects all the world of a selfishness like his own. He cannot, or will not, believe in an unselfish, a disinterested goodness. When Jehovah challenges him to find a fault in Job, he boldly challenges Jehovah to put Job to the proof, and avows beforehand his conviction that it will be found that Job has served God only for what he could gain thereby. This challenge, as Godet has been quick to observe, does not merely affect the character of man: it touches the very honour of God Himself: "for if the most pious of mankind is incapable of loving God gratuitously—that is, really, it follows that God is incapable of making Himself loved." And, "*as no one is honoured except in so far as he is loved,*" by this malignant aspersion the Adversary really assails the very heart and crown of the Master of the universe. Jehovah, therefore, takes up the challenge, and Himself enters the lists against the Adversary: Jehovah undertaking to prove that man is capable of a real and disinterested goodness, Satan undertaking to prove

that the goodness of man is but a veiled selfishness ; and the heart of Job is to be the arena of the strife.

Now it is not necessary that we should believe that such a scene as this actually took place, that such a Celestial Divan was held, that such a challenge was given and accepted. All this *may be* only the dramatic form in which the Poet clothed certain spiritual facts and convictions ; though, on the other hand, we know too little of the spiritual world to deny that a transaction occurred in it which can only be rendered to human thought by such words and figures as the Poet employs. But we should miss the very intention of this inspired Teacher if we did not infer from his "scene in heaven" some such spiritual verities as these : that there is a Good and Supreme Spirit, who is ever seeking to promote the true welfare of men ; that there is an evil spirit, who is ever seeking to deprave men and dishonour them ; that even this evil spirit is under law to God, and is used by God to promote the ultimate welfare of men, and that, "somehow, good is to be the end of ill." Such a conception of the function of the spirit of all ill runs right in the teeth of the modern sceptical suggestion, which, admitting that the plan of the great Architect of the universe may have been divinely wise, contends that somehow the devil—an independent spirit well-nigh as powerful as the Creator Himself—"contrived to become clerk of the works, and has put in a good deal which was not included in the original specification : " even as it also runs straight in the teeth of those who deny the existence of an evil spirit, and of those who fear that evil is too strong to be utterly overcome by good.

But I do not see how it can be denied that our Poet firmly believed both that such a spirit is actively at work in the universe, and that his evil activity will, in the end, be seen only to have contributed to larger good.

We may lay much or little stress on the dramatic drapery of this vital scene, as the bent of our minds may determine, but we must all lay great stress on the design announced in it on pain of misapprehending the main scope of the Poem. For here the ruling intention of the Poem is clearly and distinctly set forth. That intention is to prove, and to prove to the whole hierarchy of heaven, that God is capable of winning, and that man is capable of cherishing, an unselfish and disinterested goodness; that he can serve God for nought, that he can hold fast his confidence in God even when that supreme Friend seems to be turned into his Foe.

This is the higher intention of the Poem, this the heavenward intention. But Job does not, and can not, know of the great issue to be fought out in his own soul. Had he known what Jehovah was proving in and by him, the trial would have been no trial to him, but an honour to be accepted with impassioned gratitude and devotion. He would have cheerfully borne any calamities, any heart-searching miseries, by which the love of God and man was to be demonstrated. He would have rejoiced—as surely *we* may well rejoice—in the goodness of God in undertaking to prove the goodness of man. Of all this, however, he was necessarily unconscious. And, therefore, the Poem must have a second intention, subservient to the

first and highest. The Problem must be, and is, a double one, having an earthward as well as a heavenward, face. And, on its earthly side, the Problem is not stated for us in the Poem itself; we have to think it out for ourselves. Apparently, it is much more complicated than the other, and cannot be so simply stated. But so far as I can gather it, it may be stated thus: that the dark mystery of human life is capable of a happy solution; that the afflictions of the righteous are designed for correction, not for punishment: and that the inequalities of this life are to be redressed in the life to come.

This, then, I take to be the double intention, or purpose, of the Poem. On the one hand it was designed to demonstrate to the spiritual powers in heavenly places that God is capable of inspiring disinterested love, by proving that man is capable of a real, an unselfish goodness; and, on the other hand, it was designed to relieve the mystery of human life by shewing that its miseries are corrective, and by strengthening the hope of a future life in which all the wrongs of time are to be redressed.

The first intention is speedily and obviously carried out. Jehovah baffles and silences the Adversary, who, indeed, seems to have made but a sorry stand. He vanishes from the scene before the conflict has well begun. As, when Job is robbed of goods, children, health, he does not fulfil the prediction of the Adversary by renouncing God, Satan is at once overcome. So complete is his overthrow that the Poet does not deign even to mention it, but lets him silently drop out from the list of his *dramatis personæ*. But, for other and nobler ends than the defeat of

him "who was a liar from the beginning," the conflict is permitted to rage on in the heart of Job. He is tried in all ways—not only by the loss of wealth, children, health, though even these losses were so contrived as to mark him out for a man "smitten by God and afflicted"—but also by the despair of his wife, by the condolences and rebukes of his Friends, by the scorn of his tribe, by the insolence of the very outcasts whom he had once disdained to rank with the dogs of his flocks, by the laughter and mockery of the little children who played about the ash-heap on which he lay : tried, most of all, by having his good conscience enlisted against the goodness of God, by the temptation to deem Him inequitable, tyrannical, pitiless. But amid all his trials he constantly and passionately refused to part with his integrity, or to confess sins of which he believed himself to be innocent : nor would he, under any pressure, renounce God or let go, for more than a moment, his confidence in Him. Like a loving child chastized for an unknown fault, or for no fault at all, he turned *toward*, not *from*, his Father in heaven ; the deepest and most abiding emotion of his heart being, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." In the paroxysms of his anguish and despair he might speak wildly ; he might impugn the equity of God : nevertheless, it is always to *God* that he appeals ; and, at the close of the Story, God Himself, with the magnanimity constantly attributed to Him in Holy Writ, admits that in his wildest upbraidings Job had not been guilty of wilful wrong, nay, He affirms even that Job had kept his very lips in righteousness ; to the three humbled and amazed Friends, who

thought that they had stood up for God against Job, He says, "Go to my servant, and ask him to intercede for you : *for ye have not spoken of me aright, like my servant Job.*"

Nor is it less clear that the second and subsidiary intention of the Poem is also carried out ; though I must not now attempt to point out how, through the whole course of the Book, we are shewn that the afflictions of the righteous are signs not of wrath but of love ; that the dark mystery which hangs over human life is capable of a happy solution : and that the inequalities of this life are to be redressed in the life to come. There will be many opportunities of recurring to these points as the Exposition proceeds. For the present it will be enough to say that, even when we reach the end of Job's First Colloquy with the Friends, when, therefore, his spirit was smarting with the keenest anguish, the darkness of his despair is broken by some faint rays of hope ; that even then he could argue that as there is a chance for a tree that, even when it is felled, it will sprout again at the scent of water, so for man there may be a hope that, though he die, he will live again. When we reach the end of the Second Colloquy, and his spirit is gaining some measure of composure, this hope has risen into the assurance that his Redeemer lives, and that "without," *i.e.* apart from, "his mortal flesh," he shall see God : while at the close of the Third Colloquy, when he has triumphed over the Friends, he affirms that, whatever appearances may say to the contrary, God is and must be just, and that the fear of the Lord, this is wisdom, and to turn from evil this is understanding.

Thus both ends are gained, God is vindicated and man is reconciled to God.

A new polemical value has been given to the Book of Job by the attitude and tone modern scepticism has assumed, or reassumed.¹ The whole school represented by the Author of "Supernatural Religion"—and it is a large one, and has many disciples among the unlearned—sets, or affects to set, great value on the ethical element of the Christian Faith. They affirm² that Christ "carried morality to the sublimest point attained, or even attainable, by humanity." But they are very anxious to divorce the ethical from the supernatural element, although in the New Testament the two are interwoven into one piece, so that it is impossible to detach the one from the other without utterly destroying the whole fabric. And, hence, they also affirm both that the morality of Christ was the offspring of a merely human brain, uncharged by any Divine energy or inspiration; and that this morality will never take its due place or exert its due influence until we accept it simply as "the perfect development" and expression of the moral faculties natural to man. So long as we cleave to the belief in a *revelation* of the will of God rather than to a discovery of that high will by mortal powers, we place ourselves, it appears, at a serious disadvantage, and shall be the richer and the better for giving it up. "We gain infinitely more than we lose in abandoning belief in the reality of Divine

¹ This point has been more fully argued in vol. i. page 470-484 of THE EXPOSITOR. I here give only a brief abstract or summary of the argument there developed.

² "Supernatural Religion," vol. ii. part. iii. chap. iii.

Revelation. While we retain pure and unimpaired the treasure of Christian morality, we relinquish nothing but the debasing elements added to it by human superstition." ¹

Now it would be hard to find a more cogent and complete answer to this argument for the sufficiency of Morality apart from Revelation than that supplied by the Book of Job. For, obviously, Job had no miraculous and supernatural revelation of the will of God. He moved and lived and had his being outside the charmed and sacred circle in which such revelations were, or were supposed to be, vouchsafed. His one importunate complaint throughout the book is that he cannot see God, nor hear his voice, nor learn what his will and intention are. There is not a single reference in the Poem to the Hebrew law, to the Sacred Writings accredited by the Jews, or to the forms of life and worship which obtained among them. He is indebted for all that he knows of God to the great primitive Tradition, to the inherited and developed conceptions of the human mind. And, on the other hand, it is equally obvious that he had a pure and noble morality, hardly inferior to that taught by Christ Himself. The tumultuous agitation and excitement of his spirit under the trials to which he was exposed, prove him to be very man; and his own description of the temptations which he had successfully encountered (cf. Chap. xxxi.) shews that he was open to the very influences by which men in all ages have been turned from righteousness. And yet no one can read the Poem without feeling throughout that he is brought into

¹ "Supernatural Religion," vol. ii. part iii. chap. iii.

contact with a man of a singularly pure, high, and noble soul ; his own delineation of himself (Chaps. xxix. and xxxi.) shew him to have been a masterpiece of human goodness, with "a daily beauty in his life" up to the level of most men's exceptional and heroic moments : and Jehovah Himself is represented as pronouncing him what we feel him to be, "a perfect man and an upright, one that feareth God and escheweth evil."

In his case, then, the conditions on which modern scepticism builds its hopes for the race were fulfilled : without a supernatural revelation, he was nevertheless possessed of a morality as pure and high as can well be conceived. He ought, therefore, on this hypothesis, not only to have been content, but to have felt that he was infinitely better off than if a Divine Revelation had been added to the pure and unimpaired treasure of his morality. *Was* he content with his treasure, then ? did he feel that it met and satisfied every craving of his spirit ? On the contrary, his whole soul goes forth in a piercing cry for the very Revelation which our modern sceptics pronounce utterly superfluous. What they would contemptuously "abandon" he passionately craves and insists upon. He is tortured by the very longing which they assure us it was impossible he should ever experience, and knew no rest until he saw for himself the God of whom he had heard with the hearing of the ear, and in the light of that great Revelation learned how "vile" he was.

For purposes of study the Poem is most conveniently divided into nine parts : (1) The Proem,

or Prologue, in which the Problem about to be discussed is stated: Chapters i. and ii. (2) The Curse pronounced by Job on his Day—the occasion from which the discussion springs up: Chapter iii. (3) The First Colloquy of the great Argument: Chapters iv.–xiv. (4) The Second Colloquy: Chapters xv.–xxi. (5) The Third Colloquy: Chapters xxii.–xxvi. (6) The Soliloquy of Job: Chapters xxvii.–xxxi. (7) The Intervention of Elihu: Chapters xxxii.–xxxvii. (8) The Theophany, or the Intervention of Jehovah: Chapters xxxviii.–xli. And, (9) The Epilogue, in which the issue of this great controversy is recorded: Chapter xlii.

S. COX.

*ON THE USE OF CERTAIN SLANG WORDS IN
THE NEW TESTAMENT.*

I AM afraid that the heading of this paper will sound startling, and even irreverent. But I know of no more elegant synonym to express what I mean by slang, although I feel that it is too strong a word, as generally used, for the application I wish to make of it. In all cultivated languages certain words come to be used in familiar conversation in a sense very different from the original and proper sense, although often forcible and expressive enough. Presently this derivative use of the word (founded probably on some striking, perhaps absurd, analogy) creeps into written documents, at first under protest, always with a more or less startling effect. To mention words thus used in English slang is clearly unnecessary. What I propose to do is to point out three Greek words thus used in the New Testament,

and to compare them with equivalent or similar words in our own common talk.

The first of the three, and the best as an example, is the word σκύλλω, which I venture to think very closely represented by our word "worry." If I am right in my understanding of it, its primary application is to sheep, or other tame animals, hunted and torn by dogs or other natural enemies. It is in this sense that it appears to be used by St. Matthew in Chap. ix. 36, recalling probably our Lord's own use of the word on this occasion. The true text reads thus: "And seeing the crowds, he was full of pity for them, because they were worried [ἐσκυλμένοι] and thrown down, as sheep which have no shepherd." How forcible and natural is the metaphor here, and how in keeping with so much in Ezekiel and elsewhere! Abandoned by their shepherds, what is the fate of the hapless sheep, but to be worried and chased by wolves or jackals, and at last to throw themselves down, exhausted and hopeless, to die? The priests and scribes and elders were the shepherds whom God had appointed over his flock; but they had fed themselves only,—or, at most, only stuffed with unwholesome food a small clique of their own at Jerusalem,—while the multitudes of populous Galilee had been left in their ignorance a prey to every impostor and every fanatic that came to make havoc of them. This seems to me the great sin of the "rulers" at the time of Christ's appearing: they confined their care and their sympathy to the few who belonged to their party, and made no effort to teach and guide aright the multitudes whom Christ found so ready to listen to his

(often unpalatable) doctrine. This people, they said, which knoweth not the law, is cursed. So "this people" were like sheep worried by wild animals, and if any one has seen a flock that has been thus worried, he will feel the tremendous force of the simile, simple as it is.

But it fared with "*σκύλλω*" exactly as it has fared with "worry:" it came to be used familiarly in the common talk of common life and lost more and more of its sharpness of meaning, until it signified no more than "tease" or "trouble." It is this "slang" use of the word—so absurdly different from the proper use—which we find in St. Mark v. 35, and in St. Luke viii. 49 and vii. 6; and we find it, just as we should have expected, in the homely unstudied sayings of common men as reported by the Evangelists. In the one case it is the servants or dependants of Jairus who hurry to meet him, and to prevent him from giving useless trouble to the great Teacher: "Thy daughter is dead [St. Mark]; why *worry* the master any more?" or, "Thy daughter is dead [St. Luke]; do not *worry* the Master." Is it not exactly what might be said now under similar circumstances? Still more curious perhaps is the use of the same word in the second case by the Centurion, a man who possibly had risen from the ranks: "The centurion sent friends to meet him, saying to him, Lord, do not worry thyself [*μὴ σκύλλου*], for I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof." Here the imperative middle is used, exactly as we should say in familiar talk, "Don't worry yourself;" or, absolutely, "Don't worry." To say that such a slang use of the word is unworthy

of the New Testament is only to say that the Evangelists were bound to polish up the diction of servants and soldiers, instead of reporting it in the most life-like way possible.

The second instance to which I shall draw attention is comparatively well known, but it is remarkable as being used by our Lord Himself as well as by St. Paul. It occurs in the parable of the Importunate Widow (St. Luke xviii. 5), and is lost to sight in the tame translation of our Authorized Version, "lest by her continual coming she *weary* me." The word *ἰσχυρίζω* is well known to have been a pugilistic term, corresponding to the word "punish" in the slang of the "ring," but having special reference to the eyes of an antagonist. St. Paul uses the word in a sense less removed from the primary in 1 Cor. ix. 27, "I punish my body." One might almost translate (if the vulgarism were not intolerable), "I *give it to* my body;" but pugilism was so much more respectable among the Greeks that the Apostle could use a pugilistic term which can find no admissible equivalent in decent English. In our Lord's parable, however, the word has departed still further from its primary sense, and in the mouth of the unjust judge is clearly "slang." It is the poor widow who is to "bruise" the lazy judge, not by blows, nor by unsparing treatment, but simply by importunity. I know of no English equivalent which at all preserves the metaphor except the slang word "bore," and that is founded, apparently, on a different though not very dissimilar analogy. I suppose that a man is "bored" when the sharp pertinacity of another threatens, as it were, to drill a hole into him, as the

ceaseless turning of a metal point will bore the hardest rock. Certainly the metaphor is far-fetched enough, and one must admit that the Greek equivalent is the more expressive of the two; it is well known that the constant repetition of a very light stroke upon the body will produce a painful bruise at last. I do not know, however, how the sentence can be better rendered in English than, "lest by her continual coming she bore me."

The last instance I shall take is far more obscure, and therefore I can only suggest what seems to me the probable force of the word in question. I refer to the use of *καταναρκάω* in 2 Cor. xii. 13, 14. It is translated in the Authorized Version, "to be burdensome to"—a rendering obviously too tame and too little specific to suit either word or context. What the word signifies is evident, for it was what the Apostle had steadily declined to do—viz., live at the expense of the Corinthians. Now there are in all languages many ways of expressing this idea, mostly more or less uncomplimentary. It is likely, I think, that the Apostle would in this place have used one of the more disparaging expressions, for evidently there is a good deal of restrained sarcasm and scorn of mercenary motives in this part of his letter. Yet the word does not at first sight appear to have much point, for it is generally translated, "render numb," or, "make torpid" (cf. Gen. xxxii. 25, LXX.), and is a verb formed from *νάρκη*, the name of a kind of torpedo which has a reputation for numbing the hand that touches it. But I venture to go back to the fish itself, and to suggest that the popular use of the word was a somewhat different

one. Was not the torpedo supposed to attach itself by suction to some creature of larger growth, and to make use of it for its own support? Whether it really does so is of comparatively small concern, for neither then nor now has popular language had much regard for the facts of natural history. I strongly suspect that the idea really embodied in the word *καταναρκάω* (as borrowed by St. Paul from the Corinthians) is *not* the idea of "numbing" or "making torpid," but the idea vulgarly expressed by our own phrase, "to sponge upon." I can only guess that this latter phrase borrows its meaning from the (real or supposed) parasitic habits of the sponge as a living creature. If it be so, then there would be a singular resemblance in history and meaning between the two expressions—each borrowed by a seafaring people from the apparent habits of a marine animal, and applied with some contempt to the conduct of unworthy men. At any rate, it does not seem to me at all unlikely that the Apostle would have used such an expression as "sponging upon" in this particular passage. He was never careful of the elegance of his language when he wished it to be forcible, and in this Epistle especially he makes no attempt to be dignified. Evidently he had in his mind the very words and phrases which his vulgar detractors at Corinth had used concerning him. They had reached him in no mild dilutions, but in their original vulgar insolence, and he made no pretence of not feeling their point. They had accused him, as I think, of having "sponged upon" *other* Churches, while, with a truly natural inconsistency, they did not conceal their vexation at his refusal to put himself under any

obligation to *them*. Wonderful is the lofty earnestness with which he deals with these vulgar topics, gilding the muddy levels with the glow and sparkle of his own ardent charity. But I think he did not hesitate to repeat their own slang; he had *not* "sponged upon" them, it was true, and, moreover, he did not *intend* to "sponge upon" them, however often he came to them. RAYNER WINTERBOTHAM.

IV. THE SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS AFTER THE TIME OF SAMUEL.

BEFORE quitting the subject of the Schools of the Prophets there are one or two points connected with the gradual declension of the order which seem to merit a careful consideration.

We pass by the case of Balaam, because, though he seems to have been a true prophet, yet he did not belong to the Israelite race and had no connection with the prophetic schools. Nor shall we say much of the old prophet of Bethel who acted the part of the tempter to the man of God who came from Judah. (1 Kings xiii.) We may very well believe that he had been educated in the schools founded by Samuel; for Bethel was one of their headquarters, and we find numerous scholars there in the time of Elijah. But, doubtless, he was one of those who had acquiesced in the worship of the golden calves set up by Jeroboam, arguing, perhaps, that they were but symbols of the true Deity, and to be regarded in the same light as the cherubs in the Temple of Solomon. The very reason, therefore, why he was so anxious that a prophet of higher character and more uncom-

promising views should lodge with him was that he might thereby obtain an indirect approval of his conduct. And this explains why the man of God was so strictly forbidden to touch food in Samaria. There was to be no compromise with Jeroboam's calves, but they were to be utterly condemned. Doubtless, however, the prophetic order, like the Christian ministry, had always contained unworthy as well as worthy members; and it was not in Jeroboam's time only that there were prophets who took but a low view of the responsibilities of their office. Still we must not suppose that all the prophets who remained in Israel after the disruption of the kingdom were men of this stamp. Though there was a constant migration of the more truly religious Israelites into Judah (2 Chron. xi. 16, 17), yet various causes must have conspired to keep many men of equal piety at their homes. And thus we find "the glorious army of martyrs" largely augmented by Israelite prophets (1 Kings xviii. 4) at the time when Jezebel determined to introduce the worship of Baal. Persecution, no doubt, purified them. Many who might have excused the worship of Jeroboam's symbols were ready to die rather than abandon Jehovah's service openly. And yet, even after Elijah's labours, we find the Jehovah-prophets at Samaria mere time-servers, except the one true man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, who had to pay, as true men always must, the penalty of his uprightness and manly dealing. (1 Kings xxii. 27.)

But we now come to one of the most instructive instances of the fall of men of whom high hopes had been entertained. We find in close attendance upon the person of Elisha one who discharged for him the

same offices which he himself had rendered to Elijah, and who naturally looked forward to succeed to his office. Gehazi bears even a prophetic name, as the word signifies "the valley of vision," and we find him entrusted by Elisha with a mission of a high character. When the Shunammite, who had lost by a sunstroke the child with which she had been blessed in answer to Elisha's prayers, had hurried to the Prophet and narrated her grief, he bids Gehazi take his prophetic staff, and hasten to the child, and lay it upon its face. From the manner in which the command is given, as also from the command not to salute any one by the way, it seems likely that Elisha expected more to follow than really took place. The words also of Gehazi, "The child is not awaked," look as if he too had expected that when touched by Elisha's staff the Shunammite's son would revive. Gehazi's mission was, in fact, a failure; but the fact that he was entrusted with it shews that he was thought worthy of being Elisha's official representative. He was not merely minister to Elisha, but also Elisha's minister, by whose instrumentality the Prophet's commands were executed.

The reason, doubtless, why Gehazi's mission was unsuccessful was his personal unworthiness, revealed subsequently by his covetous dealing with Naaman the Syrian. Like Judas among the Apostles, and Demas among the disciples of St. Paul, he loved the things of this world too well, and so was unable to resist the sight of the rich treasures which the stranger had offered to his master. But we shall lose the whole point of the narrative if we suppose that Gehazi held the position of an ordinary servant. He was to Elisha

what Elisha had been to Elijah. At Elisha's death he expected to be endowed with similar powers. Elisha had not certainly known that his master's dignity would descend to him, but he had prayed that such might be the case (2 Kings ii. 9); and Gehazi had, without doubt, supposed that he would succeed in like manner to Elisha's office. Probably he had already taken part with him in the management of the prophetic schools, and we may be sure that he had been originally chosen because he had shewn himself to be a man of much promise, endowed with all the natural faculties necessary for the able discharge of his high duties. But as Saul, a man of the greatest natural gifts, when called to the kingdom ruined all his earlier promise by his wilfulness and want of self-control, so did Gehazi ruin his hopes, in a meaner way, by letting the love of money gain possession of his soul.

The case of Baruch has several points of comparison with that of Gehazi. He was a nobleman by birth, being the grandson of the Maaseiah, who was governor of Jerusalem at the beginning of the reign of Josiah, and brother of Seraiah, the king's chamberlain. (Jer. lxi. 59.) He, nevertheless, filled the office of scribe to the prophet Jeremiah, and we thus have an indirect corroboration of the Patristic view that Jeremiah himself was of high birth, and the son of the chief priest Hilkiah. We also see the gradual advance of social refinement. The Prophet's minister no longer pours water upon his master's hands (2 Kings iii. 11), but serves him in a higher capacity. All menial service, however natural in simpler days, would gradually be looked upon as unseemly

for one who was marked out as the future holder of a high and sacred office. Now it seems certain that Baruch had looked forward to being Jeremiah's successor. In Jeremiah xlv. we are expressly told that he had sought "great things for himself," and Jeremiah comforts him under his disappointment, and yet not in a very consolatory way. There is none of that praise which we might have expected from the master whom he had served so well, and, above all, he is warned that the great things he had hoped for, even the gift of prophecy, would never be granted him. Why this was so we cannot tell. Baruch seems to us, as we read the pages of Jeremiah, to have been a true and faithful servant and an earnest worshipper of Jehovah. His ambition alone excepted, all else in his character is noble and praiseworthy; and even after the assurance that he would not succeed to his master's office we find him sharing Jeremiah's misfortunes and accompanying him into Egypt. (Jer. xliii. 3-6.) Yet the higher gift of being himself Jehovah's mouthpiece is steadily denied him. It is plain from the narrative that Baruch had looked upon this gift as well within the compass of his reasonable hopes, and had been grieved when it was withheld. Oriental traditions even go so far as to represent him as so indignant at its refusal that he apostatized from Jehovah's service and adopted the tenets of Zoroaster. Though all credence is to be denied to these traditions, they nevertheless serve to shew the Oriental estimate of the place which Baruch held in Jeremiah's service, and the nature of the relation which existed between the Prophet (who was recognized as the head of the order) and the minister.

who was constantly in attendance upon him. I may add that, unless there had been something real in the prophetic gift, it is hard to see how Baruch could have sustained this disappointment. If, on the contrary, it was a special grace from God, it would be given or withheld as He saw fit. Certainly we find that Elijah could not bestow it, though it was granted to his minister Elisha. (2 Kings ii. 10.)

But though this was so, yet false claimants to the office did rise up, and one of the greatest trials in the declining days of the Monarchy, to those who wished to be led right, must have been the immense number of men who, on grounds more or less specious, claimed to speak in Jehovah's name. From the very first this difficulty had been foretold, and the command given that the prophet who incited them to abandon Jehovah's service should be put to death. (Deut. xiii. 1-5.) To lessen the danger, all divination and fortune-telling had been sternly forbidden; for there is no surer mark of falsehood than the indulging in unholy attempts to pry into the future, and the people were undoubtedly to understand that all claim to prophecy connected with divination, was absolutely, and, in all cases, untrue. (See Jer. xxix. 8; Micah iii. 6, 7, and compare Isa. xlv. 25; Ezek. xiii. 23; Zech. x. 2.) But though such a test would be of great practical value, still, so great is the general desire to know the future, and so ready are men to be deceived, that possibly only the more thoughtful were saved by this prohibition from becoming the prey of designing men.

Yet, as a whole, the prophetic order maintained a high character until the later days of the Monarchy.

No doubt there were many unworthy men in it, or men who aspired to belong to it for unworthy motives—men of the Gehazi type—even in its best days; but they were too few in number to depress their fellows to their level, and the mass were men “of whom the world was not worthy” (Heb. xi. 38): for I may remind the reader that the “sheep-skins and goat-skins” spoken of in this passage of Holy Scripture are the terms used in the Septuagint for the dress worn by the prophets. Thus Elijah’s mantle is, in the Septuagint, called his sheep-skin; and the wanderings here described refer to the constant journeys taken by him and other prophets in visiting the prophetic schools, or in preaching, like Amos, throughout the whole country. Now up to the time of Isaiah the record of the prophets is a noble one; but in his days we find the people eager to corrupt them and make them minister to their prejudices: “This is a rebellious people, . . . which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits” (Isa. xxx. 9, 10). And we gather from the Prophet’s words that the temptation had not altogether failed of its effect.

His contemporary Micah draws a harsher picture. He sets before us the prophets as one of the three leading orders in the State, but as abusing their power to further their worldly interests. At Jerusalem, he says, “the heads judge for reward, and the priests teach for hire, and the prophets divine for money” (Micah iii. 11). They doubly, therefore, degraded their office. They divined,—a thing absolutely wrong and positively forbidden; and they divined for gain.

Yet this would not make them of any political importance. They were content to get money in a mean way ; but still it was one that would give them influence only with besotted and superstitious people. In another place he represents them as exercising a sort of terrorism over their countrymen. "The prophets," he says, "make God's people err : they bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace ; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him " (Micah iii. 5). Now, before this was possible, they must have possessed considerable influence, but probably only the lower classes of the people would be thus afraid of them. By working upon their superstitious fears they forced them to bring them presents of food and money ; but the prophets who thus acted must have been of the class of diviners, and their influence was due to the high character not of themselves, but of the order as a whole.

Probably in Micah's days but few prophets had so entirely lost all respect for themselves and their office ; but the fact that there were any prophets thus fallen must have greatly struck one coming from a remote village, to whom everything at Jerusalem was new and surprising. But later on, in the days of Jeremiah, false prophecy had become a great social and political evil, and he speaks of it with righteous indignation : "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land ; the prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule at their hands " (Jer. v. 30, 31). It had been the especial duty of the prophet to magnify the spiritual lessons of the law ; to warn men that obedience is better than sacrifice ; and that what God

requires is that man should do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with his Maker. But now it seems that they induced the people to put their trust in the magnificent restoration of the Temple by Josiah; and instead of aiding Jeremiah in teaching that private reformation and penitence must accompany the king's public acts (Jer. iv. 3, 4), they taught that Josiah's efforts alone would suffice to preserve the realm from danger (Chap. vii. 4), and that the Chaldean attack, threatened by Jeremiah, would be as certainly frustrated as that of Sennacherib in the days of the pious Hezekiah. They thus lulled the people into a fancied security, and frustrated the more heart-searching and humbling lessons of the true prophet.

As the kingdom became more and more degenerate, the false prophets increased in boldness. Thus, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, we find Hananiah loudly foretelling that in about two years the power of Nebuchadnezzar would cease, and the vessels which he had taken away from Jerusalem, when he carried Jeconiah prisoner to Babylon, be restored, together with that unfortunate young prince. Apparently such favourable predictions were believed only too readily, and Hananiah, coming from Gibeon, a city of priests, and probably himself a priest as well as a reputed prophet, would exercise no little influence on the councils of the king. At all events, we find that Jeremiah is content to give him a meek and patient answer. It is only subsequently that he foretells his death, and declares that Jehovah had not sent him; and though the confederacy of the smaller kingdoms against Babylon, which Hananiah apparently had come

to Jerusalem to further, was not formed at that time, yet we can have little doubt that the hopeless rebellion of Zedekiah was the result of the vain expectations raised by men speaking falsely in Jehovah's name. Even if the king and his wiser counsellors did not believe their words, yet their words kept the minds of the people in a perpetual ferment; and the war party no doubt eagerly supported these false prophets, and took care that their prediction should be made known to all the dwellers in Jerusalem.

Nor were the Jews free from this pest at Babylon. It was Jeremiah's wise advice to them to prepare themselves for a lengthened sojourn there; but men of high position among the captives, especially Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, attempted to prevent this by promising them early deliverance in Jehovah's name. And probably their words found ready credence. Men smarting under the wrong of being torn from a beloved home would regard it as a patriotic act to believe that the Divine vengeance would overtake their conqueror. Possibly the cruel fate of those men whom Nebuchadnezzar roasted alive (Jer. xxix. 22) may have warned the people against too implicitly trusting their words. And, what was better, the exiles were men of far deeper piety than the people left behind at Jerusalem (Jer. xxiv. 5, 8), and had among them leaders who knew how to distinguish between the false and the true. Hence, though Jeremiah's words were of painful import, and bade the exiles expect no deliverance within the lifetime of those who had been carried away, yet they were believed. And thus the captivity at Babylon became the turning-

point in the nation's history, and the plague of false prophets, which had been its bane in the years which preceded the fall of Jerusalem, and had rendered all the labours of Isaiah and Jeremiah for a national repentance vain, ceased for ever. Prophecy revived in its full purity after the return from exile, but only for a time; and then, having done its work, there was silence for four hundred years. Then appeared the Baptist, wearing the prophet's garb, preaching in the power of Elias, as the forerunner of Him of whom Moses had said, "A Prophet shall the Lord thy God raise up unto thee, from among thy brethren, like unto me: unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. xviii. 15).

Yet how active they were at the commencement of the exile we learn not only from Ezekiel (xiii. 2; xxii. 25), but from a remarkable narrative contained in the Book of Jeremiah (xxix. 24-32). A false prophet at Babylon, named Shemaiah, had the audacity to write to Zephaniah, the deputy High Priest at Jerusalem, and reprove him for not restraining Jeremiah by force. It was his duty, he said, to silence such madmen, and confine them in the stocks, and put a collar round their necks, and subject them to such other indignities as might deprive them of the respect of the populace. Zephaniah did not attend to the letter, but, on the contrary, read it to Jeremiah, and put him on his guard against Shemaiah's machinations; but the narrative shews that this false prophet must have had no mean opinion of himself when he could thus write to those in high authority at Jerusalem in the expectation that his letter would induce them to inflict disgraceful indignities upon a man of such high standing and worth as the prophet Jeremiah.

In conclusion, we find Samuel's schools productive of the most remarkable results. They were the means, first of all, of raising the Israelites to a high state of intellectual culture. From the time of David to that of Hezekiah, when the Assyrians began to degrade and barbarize the land, we have the record in the Scriptures of a degree of culture, especially in Judah, far in advance of that which then obtained even in Egypt. But, secondly, from these schools sprang the order of prophets. Now, even if we grant that there were always among them men who fell short of the high standard of the body as a whole, and that, finally, the fall of the kingdom was hastened by the existence of numerous false claimants to the prophetic dignity, yet the mass of the members were distinguished for fervent piety, for pure and holy lives, and for a self-denying love of their country. And if such were the mass, what shall we say of those upon whom rested no ordinary but the special gifts of the Holy Ghost? Where besides shall we find such a series of writers whose words still speak to us with authority and power? Surely it is no common thing that we should be able to give this reverence to books written more than two thousand years ago; and that all the ingenuity which has been exercised to lower them in our esteem should have produced such trifling results! Looked at in any way, the Bible is the most remarkable phenomenon in the world; and in producing this extraordinary work the chief human means employed by God were Samuel's schools.

R. PAYNE SMITH.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

CHAPTER V. VERSES 17-25.

FROM Widows St. Paul turns to the duties, dangers, and claims of the Presbytery.

Verse 17.—*Let the elders who preside* (or govern) *well, be counted worthy of double honour* (or remuneration). This interpretation is rendered necessary by the passages of Scripture subsequently advanced to support the injunction touching this "double honour." There is no contrast intended with the honour paid to widows, nor is the word "double" used in a strictly arithmetical sense. Increased consideration may be demonstrated by practical provision for their wants. The fundamental idea of the Presbyterate is presidency or rule; and at a time when false teachers were doting over frivolous questions, and the seeds of social dissension were sown in the heart of the Church, the faculty, the *charism*, of rule was of inestimable value. The idea is thoroughly Pauline (cf. 1 Cor. ix. 4-12; Gal. vi. 6), that those who "minister the Gospel should live of the Gospel," *especially those rulers who labour* (unto weariness) *in word and doctrine*. Great emphasis has been laid upon a contrast supposed to be drawn here between the ruling and teaching elder. All that can be positively asserted is that the presidents of the Church, whose toil was especially characterized by good teaching, or whose rule in the Church was strengthened by their power and success in handling God's Word, had a special, though not exclusive, claim upon the "double honour." It is hard work to

teach well, to bring forth from the deep fountains of truth the adequate supply. It would be very desirable for the Church to lay this injunction to heart. There are certainly some positions in the Church for which kings might strive and which merchant princes might be glad to exchange for their own. The honour of all kinds lavished on a few, and the influence, the wealth, and the dignities of many are peerless; but the enormous majority of those who labour with self-abnegating love, in word and doctrine, do so, pinched by poverty and privation, depressed by physical and social hopelessness. Loving service cannot be paid for in cash. Intellectual and spiritual toil cannot be remunerated by anything short of intellectual and spiritual response, by payment in kind; but that is no reason why those who do labour unto exhaustion for Christ and his Church should not be saved from needless torture, or should be compelled to live in agonizing mendicancy.

Verse 18.—For the scripture saith (this scripture is written in Deut. xxv. 4, and is quoted in a similar typical and broad significance in 1 Cor. ix. 9), *Thou shalt not muzzle an ox while treading out corn.*¹ Among the Heathen a basket was placed round the mouths of slaves and oxen while threshing or grinding.² The idea of the passage is, that there should be liberality and trust, as well as sustenance, awarded to those who labour in word and doctrine.

¹ There were two ways in which the oxen separated the grain from the ear: by being driven continually through heaps of corn, or by dragging over and through it "a sharp threshing-instrument having teeth."

² Cf. Palm and Rost, art., *πανσικάνη*; and Smith's "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities," art., "Agriculture."

The second quotation is not a verbal adoption of Levit. xix. 13, or Deut. xxiv. 14, though our Lord (Matt. x. 10) makes a similar quotation in reference to the same matter. This fact is quite enough to account for Paul's use of the expression. He knew the "words of the Lord Jesus," which had not been recorded in any Gospel. His authority was enough. The λέγει ἡ γραφή applies strictly to the first quotation; the second is a sentence already made sacred in the lips of the Saviour, *And the labourer is worthy of his hire.*

Varied and abundant as the illustrations of ministerial duties are, the Apostle seems to turn in any direction rather than to the Jewish priesthood for analogy or typical representation. He cites the "prophet," the "father," the "builder," the "soldier," the "workman," the "racer," the "athlete," the "ox," the "day labourer," but not the priest.

Verse 19.—Do not receive an accusation against an elder (a presbyter), *except¹ in the presence of two or three witnesses.* Here Timothy, who is not a judge, has, however, to act upon the letter and in the spirit of the law contained in Deut. xix. 15. (Cf. Matt. xviii. 16.) Paul was anxious that his converts should not rush into law courts, but rather suffer wrong than fight for redress in the Heathen tribunals and before the unbelievers. He recommended arbitration among themselves, and suggested that Corinth could surely find wisdom, independence, and impartiality adequate to the execution of such a task. The visit of Timothy

¹ Ἐκτός τι μή, an exception pleonastically and powerfully stated; ἐπι, in this sense, is similarly used with δικάστημον. Jelf, Greek Grammar, § 526.

to Ephesus would provide the day and the man for the settlement of such disputes. If accusations must be brought in his presence or laid by himself against those who had the confidence of the Church, they must be on the faith of "two or three witnesses." Explanation or vindication is superfluous.

Verse 20.—*Those that sin*, i.e. are sinning, probably a reference to those who refuse the advice or remonstrance of the "two or three witnesses." The opinion of Ellicott and many others is, that the Apostle is here referring to any flagrant transgressors who might be members of the Church. I own that, though this is a perfectly legitimate translation of the passage, I prefer Huther's interpretation that St. Paul was thinking, in the main, of those presbyters against whom the accusations of which he had spoken had been laid: these *rebuke before all* (the presbyters, or all the members of the community), *that the rest may have fear*.¹ The inconsistencies of those who make a great profession of faith are more dangerous than those of the ordinary Christian, and need sharper discipline. Timothy has no right to hush up scandal or to deal so quietly with habitual offenders as to run any danger of personal compromise.

Verse 21.—*I adjure thee*; in certain other passages the word here used has the sense of "solemn testimony" rather than adjuration (see 1 Thess. iv. 6; 2 Tim. ii. 14; iv. 1), but the following words heighten the force of the expression: *before God and Christ Jesus*. It is not necessary to discuss the supposed application in this verse of Granville Sharp's rule (affirmed by Middleton, modified by Green), that

¹ This expression is a very rare one, though found in Herod. viii. 12.

“when two or more personal nouns of the same gender and number are connected by the copulative *καί*, if the first have the definite article, and the second not, they both refer to the same person.” There may be a unity of agency thus intimated, though not identity of personality. (See Acts iii. 11, and iv. 19; Ephes. v. 5.) I solemnly charge thee *before God and Christ Jesus, and the chosen angels*. Paul repeatedly refers to the ranks of the heavenly hierarchy. The angels are generally supposed to be “good,” except the contrary is stated. It is easy to understand and believe that some of these holy ministers possess loftier powers than others do, and render more abundant ministry than others can. We know that they are our witnesses and guardians, and do always behold the face of our Father. Paul bids Timothy be stimulated by their presence, and adds, *that thou guard sacredly these things*. He refers to the last topic, bearing on ecclesiastical discipline, “these things,” which had been mentioned in the preceding verses.¹ Discharge these duties *without prejudice and without partiality*. These words thus translated are not used elsewhere in the New Testament, and the reading, *προσκήσιω*, a “challenge to legal proceedings,” instead of *προσκεισιω*, “inclination to one side rather than another,” has no sufficient authority and would not yield appropriate sense.

Verse 22.—*Lay hands hastily on no one; be not thou a sharer in the sins of others; keep thyself pure*. This has, I think, been too readily supposed to refer to a custom which was in vogue in

¹ See (in THE EXPOSITOR, vol. iii. p. 385) remarks on this kind of solemn emphasis, which is one frequently adopted in these Epistles.

later ages, viz., that of laying hands on those who were absolved from their sins, or received back into the fellowship of the Church after some grievous lapse. Since, however, the Apostle has referred in these Epistles, on two occasions, to the "laying on of the hands of the presbytery" upon Timothy, and, moreover, to the circumstance that the Apostle had himself joined in this solemn act, and since the habit or custom of "laying hands" dates back to patriarchal times as a symbol of prayer and sympathy and benediction (Gen. xlviii. 14; Levit. ix. 22, 23; Numb. xxvii. 18-23), I imagine that Timothy is receiving advice as to the sanction which, in his turn, he might in this symbolic act give to the election of presbyters or bishops in the Church. By being too lax in his choice he might become a sharer in the disgrace of their subsequent failure, and be tempted to prejudice and partiality in his judgment. If, as I think, this injunction refers to the sanction of the elective act of the Church, and, still more, if it denotes the conference of ecclesiastical dignity or the welcome accorded by these means to the repentant, it renders the position of Timothy one of extreme difficulty and delicacy. It may be said that all the younger men who appeared to take their orders from Paul were accustomed to perform similar acts. This is, of course, pure conjecture as far as all the earliest literature is concerned, and there are many hints that no such sub-apostolic sanction was necessary or was indispensable to ministerial office. The ordination of Apollos by the brethren, and his commission to Corinth, where he took an analogous position with that of Paul, is a striking fact on the other side.

The venerable custom has been followed not only by Episcopal,¹ but by Presbyterian and Congregational Churches to the present day. There are those who repudiate all the help of symbolism, who baptize without water, celebrate the eucharist, or rather cherish eucharistic sentiments, without bread and wine; and so also there are others who do not hesitate to ordain elders without *cheirothesia*. The question of the validity or importance of Christian symbolism cannot be discussed here. It is of comparatively small significance by the side of the deeper question of the relation of Timothy to these presbyters. This much is certain, that Timothy might be personally compromised by imprudent appointments; that he was a referee in cases of disputed questions concerning the moral character of the presbyters, and that he wielded the authority of the Apostle in the matter of censure or approval. Since, however, the Church at Corinth, in a case of terrible immorality, had been called upon to act in its corporate capacity, as if under the sanction of St. Paul, both in the matter of forgiveness and of rebuke, both in exclusion from and re-admission to Church communion, so here it becomes highly probable that Timothy was called upon to exercise the functions of a president or moderator of the Church court, guiding decisions that were ecclesiastically valid without him. It is with peculiar emphasis that St. Paul adds, "Keep THYSELF pure." Thou canst not judge without a pure mind; and whatever ecclesiastical problem is hinted at in the words, a solemn warning is given to all who are called upon to adjudicate in difficult cases of personal character.

¹ See Smith's "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities," art., "Imposition of Hands," vol. i. p. 828.

Verse 23.—Many conjectures have been hazarded about the puzzling verse here introduced. Heydenreich has suggested the desperately wild hypothesis that there was a blank piece of the page left after Paul had finished his letter, which was thus filled in, as a postscript, by the Apostle, without reference to the context. Ellicott has supposed that Timothy was given up to certain Essenic or ascetic practices, which were preying on his health, and he was reminded that there was a deeper inward purity than could be secured by water-drinking. Alford suggested that the frequent physical infirmities of Timothy had weakened his nerve for the discharge of his difficult duties, and therefore the Apostle gives the fatherly admonition: *No longer drink¹ water* (exclusively), *but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thy frequent infirmities.* The attempt to shew that *olvos* (the *yayin* of the Old Testament) is not intoxicating beverage has utterly failed, and the numberless injunctions and warnings against excess shew that the use of wine was not condemned *per se*. The introduction of the clause in this solemn argument is not without difficulty; but it is, at any rate, a piece of advice that could not have been invented for the Apostle in the midst of the second century. Our Lord gave some technical and detailed advice to his Apostles on the night of his Passion; and here Paul lays down the simple principle that attention to physical health is not only Christian and rational, but imperative, when serious demands are likely to be made on temper, nerve, and strength. Then, widening his reference

¹ The word occurs very rarely. It is found, however, in Herodotus.

and strengthening his special injunction by a broad principle, he adds,—

Verses 24, 25.—*The sins of certain persons are openly manifest,*¹ *going beforehand* (leading on) *to judgment*, i.e. the judgment of God entrusted to the Son of Man. Such are asking publicly, and before the time, for condemnation, and about these there can be no doubtful hesitation. Universal conscience will affirm the “rebuke before all” which it may be Timothy’s painful duty to pronounce. *In the case of others*, the sins *rather follow after* the sinner, crying for vengeance. To discern these effects, these proofs of inward and concealed sins, will require more skill and penetration of character.

In like manner, the good works of some are *openly manifest*: virtue, sacrifice, holy principle, true beneficence will come forth from their obscurity. Such light must illumine the darkness of this world. It is its law to shine. Those whose goodness cannot be discovered, whose Christian holiness cannot be discriminated from worldly prudence, and whose life is not revealed by either its luminousness or fragrance, are not fitted for high service in the Church; and, moreover, *those good works which are otherwise*, i.e. which make no startling call for recognition, *cannot*, and will not, *be ultimately hidden*. “Fear not,” said Christ; “there is nothing hidden which shall not be revealed.” Real excellence will sooner or later stand revealed. “We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.”

H. R. REYNOLDS.

¹ Πρόδηλοι has rather this sense than a temporal signification. Cf. Heb. vii. 14; 2 Macc. iii. 17; xiv. 39.

THE VINDICTIVE PSALMS VINDICATED.

PART V.

IN an earlier paper¹ upon this subject we saw that, in order to vindicate thoroughly the so-called Vindictive Psalms, the following positions must be firmly established : (1) That it was lawful and proper for the writers of these Psalms to desire and pray for the temporal punishment of the wicked. (2) That the writers of these Psalms only predict and pray for the punishment of the *wicked*, not that of merely private enemies. (3) That they only predict and pray for the *just* and *proportionate* punishment of the wicked. And (4) that they pray for such punishments, not, so far as we can judge, in a spirit of malevolence or revenge, but rather in a spirit of zeal for the glory of God, desire for the vindication of right, and regard for the peace and purity of society.

And towards the proof of these propositions the following progress has been made : We have seen (1) that the Psalmists were abundantly justified in seeking, and making supplication for, the punishment of the wicked. They were justified by the principles of the Dispensation under which they lived, which was a temporal law with temporal sanctions ; justified by the provision God had made for exacting such punishments ; justified by the precedents which the history of their own race afforded them ; and, above all, justified by the ratification and approval vouchsafed to such prayers elsewhere in Holy Scripture. (2) That, in considering whether the Psalmists only pray for the *just* and *proportionate* punish-

¹ THE EXPOSITOR, vol. iii. pp. 103-105.

ment of the wicked, it is to be borne in mind that the punishments denounced by the Mosaic law, as well as those dealt out on special occasions by God Himself, were sometimes proportioned, not to the precise amount of moral guilt incurred, but (like some of the penalties of our own law) to the exigencies of the time and the peculiar circumstances of the case ; that is to say, they were sometimes exceptionally severe, not because the sin itself merited (as we should say) any such severity, but that they might be *exemplary*—might serve as a conspicuous warning to the nation and to the world. It will not occasion us any surprise, therefore, should we find that the Psalmists sometimes pray for such punishments as these ; punishments, that is to say, which, relatively to the offence committed, were excessive, but which were not excessive relatively to the object aimed at.

It only remains for us therefore, in order to complete our line of proof, to shew that both the Imprecations and Comminations of the Psalter satisfy the conditions just laid down. We have to prove, that is to say, by actual examination (1) that the denunciations of the Psalmists are in every case directed against the wicked ; (2) that the punishments denounced, all things considered, are not disproportionate ; and (3) that the spirit of the writers, so far as we can discover it, is not one of malevolence, but of charity, and piety, and disinterestedness.

Now, to establish these three positions thoroughly, it would be necessary, strictly speaking, to consider every single passage accused, or savouring, of vindictiveness. But it is obvious that any such

exhaustive and detailed examination would soon become formal, mechanical, and wearisome; and it will be sufficient, for all practical purposes, if we confine our inquiry to a few crucial instances:—to the Psalms popularly known as Vindictive; that is to say, to Psalms vii. xxxv. lv. lviii. lix. lxix. and cxxxvii. Psalm cix.—*the Imprecatory Psalm*—appears to be *sui generis*, and has been considered already.¹

But, before we embark on this inquiry, it may be opportune to remark that if we did find in these or any Psalms traces of malice and vindictiveness, such traces would be in distinct contravention of the teachings of the Mosaic law; they would be in absolute antagonism to the precepts of the very Revelation of which they form a part. For that same law, which, as we have seen, required the pious Jew, as a part of his duty, to pray for the temporal punishment of the wicked, also forbade him, with equal clearness, to cherish a revengeful spirit. It cannot be too thoroughly understood that vindictiveness of every kind is as alien to the spirit of the First Dispensation as to that of the Second. In proof of which it will be sufficient simply to recite the following provisions: “Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Levit. xix. 18); “If thou meet thine enemy’s ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him” (Exod. xxiii.

¹ THE EXPOSITOR, vol. ii. pp. 325–360.

4, 5); and, lastly, "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth, lest the Lord see it, and it displease him" (Prov. xxiv. 17, 18).¹ So clear indeed is the earlier revelation on this point, that St. Paul, when proclaiming the duties of charity and forgiveness, could find no better words to serve his purpose than that Old Testament precept, "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink," &c. (Prov. xxv. 21, quoted in Romans xii. 20). It is manifest, therefore, that if the Psalmists were vindictive, they were so in opposition to the religion which they professed, and in the teeth of its express commandments (with which they must have been acquainted) to the contrary: the obvious conclusion from which is, that nothing but the most convincing proofs will justify us in putting a vindictive construction on their words. Let us now see whether such proofs are forthcoming.

PSALM VII.

Is usually accounted the first of the Imprecatory Psalms, though its tone is rather comminatory than imprecatory. Indeed, it contains but one imprecation, that of the sixth verse, "Arise, O Lord, in thine anger: lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies." Comminations are found in verses 11-17, and imprecations upon the writer himself (under certain contingencies) in verse 5. It will need but a brief notice.

Let us begin by remarking that the Psalm is

¹ See also Job xxx. 29, 30, where malevolence is clearly recognized as a sin.

universally allowed to be Davidic, even by Ewald, who sees in the inscription "an old and safe tradition." Nor is its authorship (as might at first sight appear to be the case) a question of no importance, inasmuch as if it be indisputably "a psalm of David," then we have in this fact—until it shall be rebutted by direct testimony—a strong presumption that it is not vindictive; for we have every evidence, and it is allowed on all hands, that "David in his personal transactions was singularly free from vindictiveness."¹ In "Cush the Benjamite" some writers have seen an enigmatical name for Saul (because of the blackness of his heart), others (*e.g.* Luther, Kay) a nickname for Shimei, who is spoken of as "the Benjamite" in 2 Sam. xvi. 11. Probably all that can be positively affirmed respecting the title is that it points to some adherent of Saul (the Benjamite king), who had maligned and plotted against David. I cannot help thinking, however, that we may safely connect the composition of this Psalm with the circumstances narrated in 1 Sam. xxiv. (or possibly 1 Sam. xxvi.), as the points of contact between the Poem and the History—some of which I have indicated at the foot of the next page ¶—are, as it appears to me, too numerous to be the result of accident. And if so, we see more clearly what was the provocation which the Psalmist had received and how utterly nefarious were the plots of which he here complains. But whatever were the precise circumstances which called forth this Psalm, and whoever this Cush may have been, he was certainly an enemy of right, a violator of the eternal laws of God, as well as an

¹ Kay, Appendix on the Imprecatory Psalms.

enemy of David. For, in the first place, he had sought David's life¹ (verse 2), the life of an innocent man (verse 3), who had himself spared the life of his bitterest enemy (verse 4). More than this, he was a man who "travailed with iniquity, conceived mischief, gave birth to falsehood" (verse 14), and a man who digged pits for the innocent (verse 15).

¹ The designs of David's enemies upon his *life* are in some cases missed by the casual reader, owing to the fact that the Authorized Version generally translates *נַפְשׁוֹ*, as in Psa. vii. 2, by "soul," whereas "life" would in this and many passages more accurately represent the idea of the Original. (See Gesenius, "Thesaurus," *sub. voc.*)

¶ For points of contact between the Poem and the History, referred to on page preceding, compare,—

PSALM.	HISTORY.
" <i>Shiggaion</i> " * (title) with	"I have <i>erred</i> " (same root as <i>Shiggaion</i> , and an uncommon word). 1 Sam. xxvi. 21.
"Concerning the <i>words</i> of Cush" (<i>ib.</i>), with	"Wherefore hearest thou men's <i>words</i> , saying, David seeketh thy hurt." (1 Sam. xxiv. 9.)
"Lest he tear my soul" (verse 2).	"Thou huntest my soul to take it" (<i>ib.</i> verse 11).
"If there be iniquity in my hands" (verse 3).	"There is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand" (<i>ib.</i>).
"I have delivered . . . mine enemy" (verse 4).	1 Sam. xxiv. 18, and xxvi. 9.
"Let the wickedness of the wicked," &c. (verse 9).	"Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked" (<i>ib.</i> xxiv. 13).
"Judge me, O Lord" (verse 8).	"The Lord therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee" (verse 15).
"If I have rewarded evil," &c. (verse 4).	"I have rewarded [same word] thee evil" (verse 17).

* This term is generally understood to indicate a peculiarity either of construction (disregard of metre or dithyrambic) or of sentiment (passionate or elegiac). But may not the word, like *Al-taschith* (Pss. lvii.-lix. &c.; cf. 1. Sam. xxvi. 9.), be a reminiscence of some incident in David's life?

The denunciations, then, whatever they may be, are directed, in this case at least, against a flagrant evildoer, against an enemy of God, and thus the first condition is found to be satisfied.

But what is it, let us now ask, that David prays for? What does he desire for the man who was deliberately and treacherously plotting against his life? He simply prays God to "arise,"¹ to "awake" (verse 6), to manifest Himself as a righteous judge, to display the anger which He cherishes against the wicked (verse 11).² And what does he predict? He predicts that the just Judge will sharpen his sword,³ and prepare the weapons of death; nay, he is persuaded that this iniquity will effect its own punishment. By a righteous retribution, by a strict *re-taliation*, the persecutor shall fall into his own pit, and "his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate" (verse 16). Neither in prayer nor in prediction, therefore, is there any disproportion observable between the crime and the punishment. The Psalmist does but echo comminations which the mouth of the Lord had spoken. He has an abundant warrant for his words in the threatenings

¹ Commentators are agreed in seeing in these words, which also occur in Pss. iii. 7; ix. 19; x. 12, &c., a reference to the formula of Numb. x. 35, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered," &c. In any case, it is noteworthy that the daily orison of the Pilgrim Fathers of Israel afforded a precedent to after ages for praying for the dispersion and confusion of the wicked.

² Verse 11 should be rendered, "God is a righteous judge, and a God who is furious [*vehementer iratus est*,"—Gesenius, *in loc.*] every day." צַף strictly signifies to "foam with rage," and is related, etymologically, to the English words "scum" and "foam."

³ Ewald understands verses 12, 13, of Cush: "Der Feind werde seine Treulosigkeit erneuen." If this interpretation is correct, there are no comminations in the Psalm.

pronounced by God Himself ("I will spend mine arrows upon them;" "I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh," Deut. xxxii. 23, 42, &c.), and in the fundamental axiom of the Jewish law, "Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth." For such a miscreant as this black-hearted Benjamite had shewn himself to be, the punishment here foretold is but the "just recompense of reward."

But it still remains for us to ask, What was the source and spring of these denunciations? Was it vindictiveness, or was it righteous zeal? Does the man who here testifies that he has "delivered him that without cause was his enemy," nevertheless nurse all the while the malevolent desire for that (or another) enemy's death? Is it the yearning for revenge which inspires his prayer? Not so. It is, first of all, the instinct of self-preservation. His own safety demands the interference of God (verse 2). It is also a desire for justice. God has "commanded judgment" (verse 6, true rendering); then let Him "judge the people," yes, and judge *him* according to his deserts (verse 8), and his cruel persecutor (verse 11; cf. 1 Sam. xxiv. 15). It is, furthermore, a desire for the repression of crime and the encouragement of right. He would have "the wickedness of the wicked" checked and brought to an end (verse 9). And, finally, it is a desire for the glory of God. The righteous judgments of God, displayed upon his enemies, will constitute a fresh ground for thankfulness and praise (verse 17).

Is it possible, in the face of these testimonies, to charge this Psalm with vindictiveness? Or, rather, could its vindication be more complete?

PSALM XXXV.

The imprecations of this Psalm are found in verses 4-8, and in verse 26. The writer (who cannot be identified positively) prays that his persecutors may be checked and confounded (verse 4), scattered (verse 5); may in their turn be pursued (verse 6), ensnared (verse 8), and suddenly destroyed (*ibid.*). Is there malice or vindictiveness here? Or are our three conditions satisfied?

1. That these persecutors are evildoers is evident. They "seek his life" (verse 4),¹ devise his hurt (*ibid.*), lay snares for him (verse 7), and that without cause (verses 7, 19). They are spoilers (verse 10), wrongful witnesses (*μάρτυρες ἄδικοι*, LXX., verse 11), men who reward evil for good (verse 12), ingrates (verse 14), parasites (verse 16; literally, "profane jesters² over cakes"), plotters against the peace of society (verse 20); and, finally, they are men made confident by the silence of God (verse 22) of accomplishing their murderous designs (verse 25).

It is clear, therefore, that the enemies contemplated in this Psalm were thoroughly corrupt and wicked, and that it was neither for the good of society nor the glory of God that they should go unpunished. Let us now consider what punishments the Psalmist denounces against them.

Having represented them as "fighting" against him, he prays that they may be defeated in battle,

¹ The very words used of Saul by David, 1 Sam. xx. 1.—Kay.

² "Currying favour by profane or licentious jests, and rewarded by a share of their patrons' dainties."—Canon Cook. Perowne aptly cites the words *ψωμοκόλακες* and *buccellarii*. I venture to suggest "sycophants"—literally "fig-informers" (*σῦκον-φαίνω*)—as being the nearest English equivalent.

may be dispersed by the power of God (verses 5, 6), may be put to flight and stumble as they flee (*ibid.*). The writer pictures to himself the God of battles as interfering on his behalf. He would fain see his foes "scattered in a confused rout, utterly unresisting, like the light chaff in the windy winnowing field," while "the Angel of the Lord, the defender of the pious, strikes each in his turn with his strong arm and throws him down."¹ Now in all this we have simply a prayer for the discomfiture of wicked and malignant enemies, a prayer strictly parallel, for example, with some of the aspirations which we think it no sin to utter in our National Anthem. Nor can we chide the Psalmist for praying that those who were confederate against him might be scattered like chaff, when we remember how the piety of our forefathers, after a great deliverance, found expression in the words, "*Afflavit Deus et dissipantur.*" And in the words which follow in verse 8—where a different idea is introduced—we have a prayer for strict "*retaliation*," and no more. They had spread, or some one of them had, a net for the Psalmist: it would be a just and appropriate punishment did that net "catch himself." They had plotted an unforeseen destruction, a destruction "which he knew not of" (as in the margin), against an innocent man, for, as we find from verse 7, "without cause they had hid for him a net, without cause they had digged a pit for his soul."² Justice required that destruction which they knew not of, whether by net or pit, should come upon them. But if, in addition

¹ Canon Cook, *in loc.*

² This rearrangement of the verse is generally accepted by critics.

to this, they fell into "that very destruction" which they had planned for another; if they were "hoist by their own petard," or, like Haman, in after ages, were hanged on their own gallows, then would the connection between the crime and the punishment be still more conspicuous and the righteousness of God be yet more completely vindicated. It is for this reason that the Psalmist prays as in verse 8. The imprecations he utters are grounded upon, and are in strict accordance with, that *lex talionis*¹ which was such a fundamental article of the Jewish Code.² Their burden is—snare for snare, pit for pit, sudden destruction for sudden destruction.

A few words must be added as to the third condition—the *animus* of the writer. What was it prompted these imprecations? It was, first, the instinct of self-preservation, the desire to live (verses 3, 9, 17). If he is not to fall a victim to the craft and assaults of wicked men, then God must awake and deliver him by casting them down and destroying them. It was also the yearning for right, for justice; the longing that malice and wickedness might not triumph, and the conviction that they would triumph unless God arose to judgment (verses 10, 19, 24-26). It was, lastly, zeal for the glory of God; the desire that God should be magnified by the confusion of his enemies and the prosperity of his servants (verses 9, 10, 18, 27, 28). We see these motives conspicuous on the face of the Psalm, and we find not a word to indicate

¹ I find the *lex talionis* recognized in some ten or eleven Psalms, e.g. vii. 15; ix. 15, 16; xxxvii. 15; lvii. 6; xciv. 23; cxli. 10.

² See THE EXPOSITOR, vol. iii. pp. 115, 116.

vindictiveness, to shew that the writer desired the punishment of his enemies, in order to gloat over their pain. And, these things being so, we affirm that this Psalm, like the seventh, stands acquitted of the charge of malevolence.

PSALM LV.

The imprecations of this Psalm, or those at least which are found in verse 15, "Let death surprise them, let them go down alive into Sheol," go beyond anything which has so far come before us. It is very necessary to ask, Can such words as these be justified?

The first point to be considered is, as before, that whatever these imprecations portend, they are aimed at wicked and treacherous and blood-thirsty men. This is distinctly stated in the words which follow the curse we have just cited: "*For* wickedness is in their dwelling—in their midst." And it is conspicuous all through the Psalm. It is the oppression and hatred of the wicked (verse 3) which have wrung from the writer this agonized cry to God. They have accused him wrongfully: they have heaped iniquity upon him (*ibid.*). So fierce is their hatred, that he is in terror of his life¹ (verse 4). They are men of violence and strife (verse 9); of deceit and guile (verse 11); are unresting in their schemes of iniquity (verse 10); are false and treacherous. One who has been his bosom friend (verse 14) has nevertheless plotted against and betrayed him (verse 20); and they are all of them men of deceit and blood; men who have shed blood, or who long

¹ The terrors of death are not to be interpreted as "deadly terrors." They are the terrors which the prospect of death inspired.

to shed his (verse 23). In fact, so full-blown is the impiety of these red-handed conspirators that it seems to have suggested to the writer's mind the thought of the builders of Babel,—men who plotted even against high Heaven,—and it recalled the memory of Korah and his company.¹ Such are the miscreants against whose malice he prays for protection and for whose treachery he desires a just retribution.

But is it a *just* retribution? Is it just that they should be "swallowed up"—that death should steal a march upon them, and take them "full of bread, with all their crimes broad blown, as flush as May"? Is it just that they should "go down alive into Hades"? Certainly it is *by Jewish law*, which was the law of equivalents. The doom he desires for them is none other than the death they have plotted for him. They had compassed his destruction: had sought to swallow him up. He simply prays, according to the precepts in which he had been nurtured, that with the measure which they have meted to him it may be measured to them again. Moreover, he had a precedent for his prayer. These enemies,

¹ That this Psalm contains references to the example and fate of Korah seems to me indisputable. For we have in verse 9 the prayer, "Swallow them up" (שָׁאֲלֵם; Authorized Version, "Destroy"), which is the same word as in Numb. xvi. 32, "The earth *swallowed them up*," and as in verse 34, "Lest the earth *swallow us up* also;" while in verse 15, "Let them go down alive into Sheol," is surely a reminiscence of Numb. xvi. 33, "They went down alive into Sheol." And in the petition, "Divide their tongues," we may legitimately see a reference to the Confusion of Tongues. (Cf. Gen. x. 25, *Heb.*, with שִׁבְלֵם, "Divide.") It may perhaps be objected that this interpretation ascribes to the writer a complete confusion of thought, making him pray, first, for a total destruction of his enemies, and then for a frustration of their counsels. The answer to this is, that such confusion of ideas would only be another indication of the excitement and intensity of feeling which characterize the entire Psalm, and which have occasioned the abrupt transitions of verses 12, 15, 20.

in his belief, were as guilty as Korah and his company. He merely desires for them the fate of Korah. He would not have them "die like the death of every man" (Numb. xvi. 29, *Heb.*), or be visited after the visitation of all men, lest others should be encouraged in crime. It was because they had had no changes, no vicissitudes, no manifestations of the finger of God in their career (verse 19),¹ that they had disregarded or defied the Almighty. If, after all, they died in their nest, if they "came to the grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn is carried in in its season;" if "length of days," the prime recompense of *virtue*, was granted them, then what could their contemporaries conclude from their lives but that Justice had a halting foot? nay, rather, that there was no reward for the wicked, no God even that judgeth in the earth? Consequently the satisfaction of justice, the repression of lawlessness, the peace of society, the personal safety of the writer, and, above all, the glory and honour of God, all demanded that these open and notorious sinners should be openly and speedily checked in their career and be made an example to their age. And how could this better be than by God's dealing with them as He had already dealt with sinners of the same stamp,—by bringing them down alive to the pit of destruction? For the petition of verse 15, therefore, and for the corresponding prediction in verse 23, we may find ample justification in the annals of the Hebrew people.²

¹ The meaning of this verse is much disputed. This interpretation seems as satisfactory as any which has been suggested.

² For a general defence of this and similar prayers see THE EXPOSITOR, vol. iii. pp. 196-200.

But as to the spirit of the prayer, was it not, after all, justify it as we may, an outburst of vindictiveness? I fail to find a syllable which affords the least warrant for any such charge. Doubtless it is the cry of one deeply and cruelly wounded; doubtless a feeling of resentment may have struggled for expression in the writer's mind; but unless we insist on putting upon his words a construction which he disclaims, and which probability also rejects, this is not the language of mere resentment. I say the writer disclaims, practically, the idea that he is actuated by resentment. For he assigns a reason, *the* reason, for his imprecations, and that reason is *their* wickedness and villany (verses 9, 10, 15). And I say, too, that probability rejects a malevolent interpretation of his words. For the question really is, whether the Psalmist has offered vindictive prayers to a Being who has distinctly and repeatedly condemned vindictiveness; whether the Psalm, that is to say, exhibits the egregious inconsistency of appeals deliberately made to God in a way which the writer must have known all the while would be distasteful to God. In favour of this most improbable conclusion nothing can be alleged, and against it is the fact that the Psalm is characterized throughout by the calm assurance that the author is only asking what is just and right; that he is praying in complete accordance with the Divine will and pleasure. (See verses 17, 19, 22, and compare the prayer of verse 15 with the persuasion expressed in verse 23.) I submit therefore, that it is much more difficult to believe that this Psalm *is* vindictive than to hold, as we do, that it is not.

JOSEPH HAMMOND.

NOTES ON COMMENTARIES.

3—THE PROPHETS.

THE commentaries on *Isaiah* are far too numerous to be even so much as enumerated. Those who are familiar with German should not fail to consult Ewald's great work on the Prophets, though in this, as in all his works, he needs to be read with caution and with much allowance for his critical and sceptical infirmities. To merely English readers I would commend Mr. Cheyne's Translation and Notes on the Book of Isaiah (published by Macmillan); the incomplete exposition of Rowland Williams contained in his volumes on the Hebrew Prophets contemporary with the Assyrian Empire (published by Williams and Norgate); Delitzsch's Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah (published by T. and T. Clark); and, above all, Sir Edward Strachey's "Jewish History and Politics in the Times of Sargon and Sennacherib" (published by W. Isbister and Co.).

The two books which I have placed first on the list, like Ewald's greater work, need to be read with discretion. Mr. Cheyne's conceptions of the life and writings of Isaiah are, indeed, confessedly based to a large extent on those of the great German exegete; and in his handling of these sublime compositions, especially in his attempts to recast them on insufficient critical and chronological data, he betrays a good deal of the caprice and dogmatism for which Ewald was notorious. Nevertheless he is a good and accurate scholar, and may often be consulted with advantage. Rowland Williams impresses one

as rather a student of Hebrew than as a finished scholar, and the questioning and sceptical attitude of his intellectual nature often misleads him. But there was a certain freshness and originality in his mind which render his thoughts valuable, and at times he shews much insight into the truths which the Prophet was commissioned to announce. Delitzsch's work ranks far higher than either of these. It is indeed of the highest exegetical value. For a careful and scholarly exposition of Isaiah's language I know no commentary to compare with it.

And what is lacking in Delitzsch may be found in the admirable work of Sir Edward Strachey—to which, as it is less known than it deserves to be, I wish to call attention. I have worked with it for nearly twenty years, and can speak of it, therefore, with the emphasis of experience. Published originally, in 1860, by Kerslake of Bristol, it is now sent out in a much improved form by Messrs. Isbister and Co. of London. Nor is it improved in form only. Sir Edward has evidently had the book much in his thoughts during the years which have elapsed since he wrote it; and in the new edition he has not only revised, often recast, the whole text of the volume, but has also made considerable additions to it, and has even—a still harder task for an author—cut out or compressed many sentences and paragraphs. Still, even now, the work is substantially the same as it was sixteen years ago. Despite its new name, it is really what it was first called, “A Critical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah, and their Fulfilment in History, with an Amended Version”—a very useful and admirable translation it is—“of the

Text." The features in this commentary which impressed me when I first read it, and which have grown upon my liking as I have used it, are these : Sir Edward Strachey has read and digested the best German commentaries on this Scripture. With all his respect and admiration for the great scholars of Germany, however, he has not permitted them to run away with him, to dominate his mind. He gives us what is best in them, but gives it to us strained through the calm good sense of an Englishman, refined by culture, but with a firm grip on the essential facts both of literature and of human life. He shews, moreover, a familiar acquaintance both with classical and modern literature, so that he can speak to cultivated Englishmen in their own language and tone. And, above all, he looks on the prophecies of Isaiah with the eyes of a practical politician and statesman, really believing that the men of that time were very like the men of the present day,—“fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter,” actuated by the same motives, susceptible to the same influences, and living under the same retributive law; and that if he can only ascertain what the great moral principles were which Isaiah laid down, and which the subsequent events of history have demonstrated and confirmed, he will discover the principles by which the moral government of the world is still conducted, and on which both he and all men will do well to act. There is, I apprehend, at least to students of a secluded life, a singular charm in commentaries written by non-professional men who are conversant

with public affairs, and who, though sincerely religious men, discuss the phenomena of the Sacred Writings and Chronicles with the same freedom and in the same method that they would take to the study of any other history or literature. And this charm is very potent in Sir Edward Strachey's book.

Moreover, the book, though written in this tone and spirit, is written reverently, and—in the best sense of the word “orthodox”—reaches orthodox conclusions. Sir Edward, for example, will not for a moment give in to the theory that “Isaiah,” in its present form, is a comparatively late compilation from various authors. He not only argues the point as a question of authority, but as a question of literary art, and maintains that, as the separate prophecies, so also the entire Scripture, is a coherent and finished whole, which proves itself, by the subtle lines of sequence and connection that pervade every part of it, to be the product of a single hand. A few words may be cited as indicating his general conclusion on this point, and as an instance of his telling and animated style :—

“If we find indications that the whole Scripture, looked at as a whole, is more like the growth of an individual mind than a collection of writings of men who lived in times far apart from each other ; if we can, as we proceed, trace the manner and method in which the Prophet's views opened out as he came in contact with, and sought for, the deepest springs of the circumstances and events of his own times, then the proportion and relation of particular parts to each other and to the whole will become an important element of the question, and those of

which the genuineness is disputed will be seen in a light, and with advantages, not available to us if we merely analyze each separately. The fact of such a vital coherence and interdependence will, I believe, become more and more apparent as we go on; we shall find a harmony, not resulting from mere mechanical compilation, but from the presence of one informing and enlivening spirit, and our reason no less than our religious feeling will resist the dismemberment of any part of the organized whole. And if so, we shall escape from the negative and the hypothetical, to the positive and the historical."

On *Jeremiah* and *Lamentations*, Dr. Nägelsbach (in Clark's translation of "Lange's Bible-Work") and Keil (also published by Clark) may be consulted with much advantage; but, as I have already said, the exposition of the Dean of Canterbury, in "The Speaker's Commentary," is by far the best popular exposition of the writings of this plaintive prophet with which I am acquainted.

Of *Ezekiel* and *Daniel* I have no exposition which at all contents me, though on the latter prophet Dr. Pusey has much that is good: and as for the *Minor Prophets*, their expositor is still more evidently to come.¹ Keil, indeed, is at his best here, and often throws light on obscure passages. But neither Keil nor any other commentator has set this wonderful series of poems in their proper historical framework in which, like opals kindled by adjacent brilliants, they would shed forth their subtle and many-hued lustre. For Joel, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zechariah, and

¹ I have not yet seen, however, the volume on the Minor Prophets just issued by the publisher of "The Speaker's Commentary."

Malachi I have myself attempted this service in the pages of "The Bible Educator," with very imperfect success. And I am not aware that any one else has so much as attempted it. May the Lord of the harvest soon send forth servants to reap this wealthy field, and to gather in its fruit for the nourishment of his Church.

I append extracts from two of the commentaries already named, both that I may give some little taste of their quality and because they touch on points of literary structure and usage in which Biblical students take no little interest. In his "Introduction" to the Book of Lamentations—a book of which the *alphabetical* construction is very marked—the Dean of Canterbury has the following sensible and valuable remarks :—

It has been sometimes objected to this method of arrangement that it is incompatible with real feeling. With equal truth it might be said that rhyme is inconsistent with real feeling. It is probable that to most Orientals the arrangement of words so as to end in similar sounds would seem trivial; the same objection has been brought by us in the West against their method of arranging their thoughts in alphabetical order. Really both methods depend upon the same law of our natures. It is a distraction and relief to the mind in sorrow to have some slight external difficulty to contend with, and the feeling diffused before in vague generalities is thus concentrated and assumes a definite form. What can seem at first sight more artificial than the lyrical poetry of the Greeks and Romans, in which, throughout the whole ode, the quantity of every syllable is fixed and line answers to line with unvarying exactness? Yet how naturally do all the deeper emotions of the mind yield themselves to these restrictions! And so here. The sorrow of the prophet would have spread itself out in boundless generalities but for the limitations of form. According to Oriental habit these restrictions are at the beginning, with us chiefly at the end, of each verse; with the Greek and Romans all through. But it was the limitation which gave shape to the sorrow which otherwise was floating vaguely around him. Tersely and vividly thought after thought

shaped itself round each letter of the alphabet in order, and in the effort the prophet found relief from his anguish. So with men now. The necessities of rhyme and rhythm are an aid, not a difficulty, in expressing their emotion at times when deeper feelings are stirred. The slight effort required enables the sufferer to concentrate his thoughts; it helps him in finding for them proper expression. And usually the deeper the sorrow the more complex is the structure of the poetry in which it is embodied, because the effort is in itself a relief.

In the Commentary on Habbakuk contained in "The Bible Educator," when dealing with the sublime Ode recorded in Chap. iii., the author, after tracing the general course and sequence of thought in the Ode, has the following remarks on the hints which Habbakuk himself drops on its structure, form, and use :—

In the superscription he calls it "a prayer," and ordains that it be sung '*al shigyonôth*, that is, "in dithyrambic measures." Thrice, in verses 3, 9, and 13, he appends the musical "note" or mark, *Selah!* And in the subscription, he addresses it, "To the conductors of the Temple music," and intimates in the words, "With my stringed instruments," the kind of orchestral accompaniment to which it is to be set. Of course, all these hints or signs conclusively mark out the ode as intended for the public worship of the Temple, as a "hymn" or "psalm" to be sung in or by "the great congregation." But, besides this general meaning, each of the words or phrases has a significance peculiar to itself, which we must try to recover. Even the fact that Habakkuk calls his poem "a prayer," has in it a valuable suggestion, especially when we remember that the Psalms of David are also called "*the prayers* of the son of Jesse" (Psalm lxxii. 20). It suggests that the current conception of prayer is too colourless and too limited. According to Habakkuk and David, prayer is not the mere utterance of desire in the simplest forms of speech; nor is it always even a direct address to the Almighty. It includes much more. It is often and mainly a devout meditation on God, on his works and providence, and on our relations to Him; it is a meditation on spiritual facts and verities, conducted under a reverent and stimulating sense of the Divine Presence. It is thinking *with God in all our thoughts*. And, often, it utters itself in words full of colour, glow, and passion, depicting the scenes of nature or the events of history in phrases steeped in the kindling hues of imagination, or in poetic cadences that chime like sweet bells in tune. As used by the prophet, then, the word "prayer" prefixed to his ode meant that it was to be adopted into the Temple

liturgy; but its main value to us lies in its suggestion of the wide scope of thought and utterance permitted to man in his intercourse with the Majesty of Heaven.

All the other hints attached to the ode by the prophet relate to its public performance rather than to its theme, and compel us to glance at a subject of which but little is known. Of the Hebrew modes of music we know nothing, or hardly anything, beyond the fact that they had many distinct and clearly marked modes and forms of musical composition. In the titles of the Psalms we find them denoted by such phrases as *'al haggittith*, *'al ṛgînôth*, *'al shigyônôth*; but what these styles were we can only infer from the roots from which these words are derived, and even on this point there is a wide diversity of opinion. Very possibly *'al haggittith* means "in the Gittite manner," and denotes a style of music borrowed by the Hebrews from the Philistine clan of Gath.¹ Very possibly *'al ṛgînôth* means "on the strings," and denotes a purely instrumental form of music, a form in which only stringed instruments, as viols, harps, citherns, were employed. Very probably *'al shigyônôth* means "in *wandering* measures," and denotes music of "a stormy, martial, and triumphal" mode. This is the term Habakkuk uses in his superscription; and the most probable meaning of the term is, that his ode was to be sung to music of the most impulsive and passionate kind, full of abrupt changes and transitions, such as the words of the ode demand. In short, it seems to have been the Hebrew analogue of the Greek dithyramb, or hymn to Bacchus (Dithyrambus), which Plutarch describes thus: "And verily to Bacchus they do chant in their songs certain *dithyrambick* ditties and tunes, full of passion and change, with motions and agitations to and fro."²

The orchestra of the Temple was much larger, more various, and well organized than is commonly supposed. It included stringed instruments, wind instruments, and instruments of percussion—viols and harps, for instance, flutes and horns, timbrels and cymbals; the conductor himself, strangely enough as it seems to us, playing the cymbals—probably that he might the better mark time.³ The ordinary

¹ In the "Life of Sir Henry Lawrence" there is a hint which seems to confirm this conclusion, and which it would probably repay some Oriental scholar to pursue. In vol. i. pp. 474-76, Sir Henry gives us two odes composed by a Nepalese minstrel, in honour of the Chief Minister of her native Court. These odes are superscribed thus:—"Translation of songs composed by Heera, one of the minstrels, in eulogy of General Matabar Sing, her patron; in the measure of Bhoopal." It is at least curious that this custom of prefixing to a song or ode the "measure" in which it is to be sung—this measure, moreover, being borrowed from an alien yet neighbouring race—should be still preserved in the "unchanging East." And there may be something more than coincidence in the fact that just as a Hebrew Psalm was to be sung in the measure of Gath, so a Nepalese song may still be sung in the measure of Bhoopal.

² See Holland's *Plutarch*, p. 1134.

³ 1 Chron. xvi. 5; and xv. 19.

band of the Temple consisted of 166 musicians, presided over by a body of twelve skilled players, with one of the sons of Asaph, Heman, or Jeduthun as conductor. Now we know that the service of the Temple was divided into twenty-four "courses," in one of which every priest and Levite took their turn of duty. And, as even the musicians of the Temple were chosen from the Levitical tribe, we might perhaps have inferred that there were twenty-four such bands, each serving in its turn; so that on grand festal occasions, it must have been possible to bring together close upon four thousand ($166 \times 24 = 3984$) competent musicians, *i.e.* instrumentalists, besides the vast choirs of singing men and singing women.¹ But this doubtful inference is put beyond doubt by the express declaration of 1 Chron. xxiii. 5, that "*four thousand*" Levites were set apart to "praise the Lord *with the instruments*." So large a number of skilled instrumentalists, devoted to the study and practice of music age after age, implies a degree of musical culture which could not but issue in the formation of many expressive styles of composition, and an indefinite variety in the form and mode of accompanying the singers, whether in solo or in chorus. Every great composer would orchestrate differently, choosing such instruments, and in such numbers and combinations, as would best express his conceptions. The Hebrew rabbis assure us that such changes were made, and lay down the limits within which they were lawful. "Of psalteries (a kind of guitar) not less than two were to be used, and not more than six; of flutes, not less than two nor more than twelve; of trumpets not less than two, but as many as were wished; of harps or citherns not less than nine, but as many as were wished." It is to this custom of suitably selecting and grouping the instruments of the orchestra, that Habakkuk seems to allude in the "direction" subjoined to his ode, "With *my* stringed instruments;" that is, "Let the ode be sung to the sound of the harps, viols, psalteries which I commonly employ, or which I have specified." Like most of the Hebrew prophets, Habakkuk seems to have been a trained and accomplished musician, and no doubt he was on good terms with "the conductors of the Temple music;" of whom there were twenty-four, chosen from the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, so that they would at once understand which instruments

¹ That women took part in the musical service of the Temple is evident from the fact that (1 Chron. xxv. 5, 6) the *three daughters*, as well as fourteen sons, of Heman were "under the hands of their father for song in the house of the Lord, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God." It is also implied in the fact that (Ezra ii. 65) singing women as well as singing men are mentioned among the captives who returned from Babylon. The *trumpeters* do not seem to have been included even in this vast array of instrumentalists. According to 1 Chron. xv. 24, and xvi. 6, the priests, as distinguished from the Levites, were appointed to sound the trumpets; and in the dedication of the Temple under Solomon, with the Levites who sang and played on "cymbals, psalteries, and harps" were associated "a hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets" (2 Chron. v. 12, 13; vii. 6).

he would have them employ, and what was the style of music to which he wished his ode to be sung.

The word "Selah," which is thrice inserted as on the margin of the ode, appears to have had a double meaning. I am disposed to think that it is one of those puns, or plays on words in a double sense, which so often occur in Hebrew literature, and especially in Hebrew poetry. It may be derived either from the verb *sālal*, "to raise," or from the verb *sālah*, "to suspend." And it seems to have been used in both meanings. To the singers, it was probably a direction—answering to the modern "rest"—to pause, to "suspend" their voices; while to the instrumentalists it was a command to "raise" or elevate their tones, and answered very much to our modern *forte*. Some critics go so far as to say that it marks the point at which, the voices ceasing, the wind instruments were added to the strings, the silver trumpets pealing high over all, and the cymbals marking time with a clang. But all we have probable warrant for—and we have only probabilities even for this—is that the word *Selah* marked the points at which a brief symphony came in, the singers pausing, while the instrumentalists played with added power.

The conclusion in which all these hints combine to land us is this, that Habakkuk intended his ode to be introduced into the liturgical service of the Temple; to be set in the freest, and boldest, and most various style of the Hebrew music; to be sung by the cultivated Levitical choirs, accompanied, in subdued tones, by the stringed instruments of the Temple orchestra, and broken by symphonies in which the full strength of the orchestra would be employed to set forth the sublimity or the tenderness either of the passage that had just been sung, or of that which was about to be sung, or in effecting an artistic transition from the one to the other. We may also infer from them, perhaps—as many of the best critics have inferred—that Habakkuk was himself an accomplished musician, as well as a poet of the first rank. The inference that he was also a Levitic instrumentalist, accustomed to take part in, if not to conduct, the musical service of the Temple, appears to be a more doubtful one, though some of our ablest commentators have no doubt about it.

EDITOR.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

I.—THE PROLOGUE. (*Chaps. i. and ii.*)

THE Book of Job has, as we have seen, a double purpose or intention. Its higher intention is to shew that God is capable of inspiring, by shewing that man is capable of cherishing, that genuine and disinterested affection which is the very soul of goodness: this is the fact which Satan challenges and which Jehovah undertakes to prove. Its second, but hardly secondary, intention is like unto the first, viz., to shew that, while the goodness of which man is capable has a natural tendency, under the rule and providence of a righteous God, to secure for him a full measure of temporal prosperity and happiness, it is nevertheless independent of such a reward, that it can dispense with it; or, in other words, that man is capable of loving right simply because it is right, and of hating wrong purely because it is wrong, even though he should not gain by it, but lose. In this aspect of it, the Poem is an emphatic condemnation of the "utilitarian" theory of morals, which assumes that men follow after that which is good only because they find goodness to be profitable for all the uses of this present world.

At the outset Job is placed before us as the model

of a perfect man,—“the very paragon of his age,” “without his peer in all the earth.” His outward conditions are large and prosperous : he has seven sons and three daughters, who seem to have been not unworthy of even such a father as he, and are united to each other, and to him, by a singularly close and cordial attachment. He is not a nomad, but a settled and wealthy landed proprietor, with a vast estate and immense possessions, and he is recognized as “the greatest of the Sons of the East,” probably that is, as the wisest and noblest, as well as the wealthiest, man of his age. So far he presents that combination of personal goodness with happy outward conditions which the ancients regarded as the normal and invariable result of the righteous rule of God. Such a combination, however, was sure to give rise, sooner or later, to the suspicion that the goodness which had prosperity for its result might also have it for its motive ; that the righteousness even of the best of men might prove to be only a subtle and refined selfishness. That this question might be raised in its most searching and crucial form, and answered in a manner the most complete, authoritative, final, it is carried up into heaven, where alone the profound mysteries of life can be adequately handled ; and it is argued out—nay, fought out—there. A fallen angel, a “son of God,” who has sunk from his first estate, challenges the reality of human goodness : “Is it *for nought* that Job fears God ? Is not his piety simply a matter of profit and loss ? Does he not do right only for the gain he may get thereby ? Take away the gain, and what will become of his good-

ness?" Confident in the sincerity of his servant Job, assured that *he* at least is not one of those—

"Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves,"

Jehovah accepts the challenge. He consents that Job shall be stripped of all that he has ; that all his gains shall be taken from him, and only his goodness left. Nor need any man question either the justice or the kindness of God in exposing him to what seems so cruel an experiment. The path of danger is the path of honour. Could Job have known, as Jehovah did know, that he was being put to the proof in order both that all the hierarchy of heaven might be convinced of man's capacity for a sincere and genuine piety, and that all subsequent generations of men, looking back on the trial of his faith, might find it pregnant with incentives to courage, and patience, and hope—could he have foreseen this "*end* of the Lord," we may be very sure he would have rejoiced that he was counted worthy to suffer for an end so large and so noble.

That, however, he did not, and could not, know. Nevertheless "*he endured*," and entered into the blessedness of the man who, when tried, is found constant. Deprived of flocks and herds, his faithful servants and his loving children, in a single day ; deprived of them with a suddenness and in forms which would inevitably mark him out as a man "*smitten of God and afflicted*," he nevertheless retained his integrity, and possessed his soul in

patience. So far from renouncing God because his gains were gone,

“and all
That made him happy at one stroke was taken
For ever from the world,”

he fell on his face before Him and worshipped Him. The Adversary has only one device left; for, among other features which distinguish the “Adversary” of this Poem from the “Satan” of later inspired authors is the fact that he is represented as using only outward means, that he has no recourse to those inward spiritual suggestions by which *we* are most keenly tempted; *these* are left to the wife of Job and his friends. Job has lost much, but not all: his health remains, and, with his health, the possibility of recovering what he has lost. Of this too, therefore, Satan seeks, and is permitted, to despoil him. He smites Job with the most loathsome and monstrous form of disease known among men, a form, too, which was universally regarded as the revenge taken by an insulted Heaven on some heinous and enormous sin. And now, in the fullest and extremest sense, Job is stripped of all that he had gained by loving and serving God; nay, and even to his own mind, he is stripped of it by the very hand of God Himself. Nevertheless, he submits without a murmur, as who should say,

“Nay, I will be the pattern of all patience;
I will say nothing,”

and shews himself as ready to accept evil from the hand of the Lord as good. His very wife turns upon him, and counsels him to utter the exact

words which Satan had flattered himself that *he* could wring from his lips (comp. Chap. i. 11, final clause, with final clause of Chap. ii. 9). And, still, Job sinned not with his lips. True, a curse does fly from them at last; the silent sympathy of the Friends evokes from him what no pressure of loss and misery could extort from his constant soul: but when he opens his lips he curses,—not God, but himself and the day which gave him birth.

Jehovah, then, has already gained the victory over the Adversary. Satan has exhausted his resources; he has nothing more that he can do; and he sullenly acknowledges his defeat by flight. His baneful figure vanishes from the Poem. We see him no more; no, not even at the end of the Drama, when the other persons of the Story come forward to receive the final sentence of Jehovah. For God and for us, to heaven and to earth, the patient Job has demonstrated that a genuine and unselfish goodness, a goodness which can not only dispense with reward but can also endure every form of loss, indignity, pain, is possible to man even here upon the earth and under the inauspicious conditions of time.

CHAPTER I.—*There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job. This man was perfect and upright, and one who feared God and eschewed evil. 2. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. 3. His cattle also were seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and [he had] a very large household; so that this man was great before all the Sons of the East.*

4. Now his sons were wont to make a banquet each of them at his house on his day; and they used to send and bid their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. 5. And so it was, when the days of the banquet had gone round, Job sent for them, and hallowed

them; and he gat him up early in the morning, and offered up burnt offerings according to their number: for Job said, *Haply, my sons have sinned and renounced God in their hearts. Thus did Job alway.*

6. Now it happened on a day, when the Sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, that Satan also came among them. 7. And the Lord said to Satan, *Whence comest thou?* And Satan answered the Lord and said, *From hurrying to and fro in the earth, and from going up and down in it.* 8. Then said the Lord to Satan, *Hast thou considered my servant Job?* for there is none like him on the earth, a perfect man and an upright, one that feareth God and escheweth evil. 9. And Satan answered the Lord and said, *Is it for nought that Job feareth God?* 10. Thou, hast Thou not made a fence round him, and round his house, and round all that he hath? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his cattle spread themselves abroad over the land. 11. But only put forth Thine hand and touch all that he hath,¹ [and then see] if he will not renounce Thee to Thy face. 12. And the Lord said to Satan, *Behold, all that he hath is in thine hand; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.* So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

13. Now it happened on a day, when his sons and his daughters were eating, and drinking wine, in the house of their brother the first born, (14) there came a messenger to Job and said, *The oxen were plowing, and the asses grazing close by, (15) when the Sabæans fell upon them, and carried them off; and they smote the young men with the edge of the sword; and I am escaped, even I alone, to tell thee.* 16. While he was yet speaking, there came another, and said, *A fire of God fell from heaven, and burned the flocks and the young men, and consumed them; and I am escaped, even I alone, to tell thee.*

¹ The ellipsis of verse 11 requires to be filled up with some such words as "and see," or, "then see." Similar ellipses are not uncommon in Oriental literature. Thus in the Corân we read (Sura xxv. verses 9 and 22): "They say, What sort of apostle is this? He eateth food and walketh the streets. Unless an angel be sent down and take part in his [warnings, or a treasure be thrown down to him, or he have a garden that supplieth him with food, . . . and these unjust persons say, Ye follow but a man enchanted." And again: "They who look not forward to meet us say, If the angels be not sent down to us, or unless we behold our Lord. . . . Ah, they are proud of heart, and exceed with great excess." In each of these cases we must supply the words "we will not believe," in order to complete the sense. Many such ellipses may be found in the Corân alone.

17. While he was yet speaking, there came another, and said, The Chasdim formed three bands, and rushed upon the camels, and carried them off, and smote the young men with the edge of the sword; and I am escaped, even I alone, to tell thee. 18. While he was yet speaking, there came another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating, and drinking wine, in the house of their brother, the first born, (19) when, lo, there came a great wind from across the desert, and smote the four corners of the house, so that it fell on the young folk, and they are dead; and I am escaped, even I alone, to tell thee.

20. Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head; and he fell on the ground and worshipped, (21) saying: Naked came I from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken; blessed be the name of the Lord.

22. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God with wrong.

CHAPTER II.—Again it happened on a day, when the Sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, that Satan also came to present himself before the Lord. Then said the Lord to Satan, Whence comest thou? 2. And Satan answered the Lord and said, From hurrying to and fro in the earth, and from going up and down in it. 3. And the Lord said to Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on earth, a perfect man and an upright, one that feareth God and escheweth evil? And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou didst move me against him, to swallow him up without cause. 4. And Satan answered the Lord and said, A skin for a skin, and all that a man hath, will he give up for his life: (5) but only put forth Thine hand, and touch his bone and his flesh, [and then see] if he will not renounce Thee to Thy face. 6. And the Lord said to Satan, Behold him in thine hand; only spare his life.

7. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with a grievous ulcer from the sole of his foot even to his crown. 8. And he took him a sherd to scrape himself withal as he sat upon the ashes. 9. And his wife said to him, Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity? Renounce God, and die. 10. But Job said to her, Thou speakest as one of the impious women speaketh. Shall we, then, accept the good from God, and shall we not accept the evil?

In all this Job sinned not with his lips.

11. Now three of Job's friends heard of all this evil that had

befallen him ; and they came each from his place—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuchite, and Zophar the Naamathite : for they had concerted together to come and condole with, and to comfort him. 12. But when they lifted up their eyes from afar and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept ; and they rent their mantles, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. 13. So they sat down with him upon the ground for seven days and seven nights ; and none spake a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great.

CHAPTER I. *verse 1.*—The derivation of the word "Job" is still undetermined. Many assume it to mean *plagued*, or *afflicted* ; some, to mean *penitent*. All we really know of it is that the name was borne by a son of Issachar (Gen. xlv. 13), and that it is closely related to *Jobab*, a name borne by a descendant of Esau (Gen. xxxvi. 33), an Edomitish prince, with whom an early tradition identifies the hero of our Poem. Canon Cook suggests, with much reason, as I think, that "both forms (Job and Jobab) are probably derived from a word signifying jubilant exultation, and expressing the joy of a noble family at the birth of a heir."

"A man in the land of Uz," *i.e.* a Hauranite. The catholicity, or universalism, of the Poet comes out in the very selection of his hero. He saw, as Professor Davidson remarks, "that God was not confined to the Jew, but was and must be everywhere the Father of his children, however imperfectly they attained to the knowledge of Him ; he saw that the human heart was the same, too, everywhere, that it everywhere proposed to itself the same problems, and rocked and tossed under the same uncertainties ; that its intercourse with Heaven was alike, and alike awful, in all places ; and away down

far in that great Desert, stretching into infinite expanse, where men's hearts draw in from the imposing silence deep still thoughts of God, he lays the scene of his great Poem. He knows, Jew though he be, that there is something deeper far than Judaism, or the mere outward forms of any Dispensation; that God and man are the great facts, and the great problem" their relation to each other.

The description of this verse gives a complete view of Job's character. The word translated "perfect" does not imply that he was absolutely without sin, but that he was simple, single-hearted; that his character was woven of one piece throughout, that there was no duplicity in it; that by confession and sacrifice he had been absolved from such offences as he had committed, so that he was free from conscious, wilful, habitual sin. In short, he was what Shakespeare calls a man of "a *clear* spirit." The epithet "perfect," as distinguished from and complemented by "upright," signifies that he was *inwardly* lacking in none of the qualities and attributes of a righteous man, and that this inward righteousness and completeness wrought itself out in a well-balanced and erect life.

The first two epithets of the verse depict him as he was in himself; the second two in his relation to Heaven. He walked in that "fear of the Lord" which is both the beginning and the end of wisdom, and necessarily, therefore, maintained a steadfast abhorrence of evil in every form. There can be no doubt that the four epithets taken together are intended to set Job before us as an ideally perfect man, a man not only morally blameless but also both sincerely and scrupulously religious; a man whose

virtue and piety are beyond suspicion : for this is the fundamental assumption of the Poem, the fact on which the whole Story turns and proceeds ; moreover Jehovah Himself is introduced as attesting and confirming it (Chap. i. 8 ; and Chap. ii. 3). The best commentary on the whole verse is contained in Chapters xxix. and xxxi., in which Job depicts himself as he was in the happy days when "the Almighty was yet with him."

Verse 3 describes the possessions of Job. The word rendered "substance" in the Authorized Version, and here rendered "cattle," always means live stock. Ritter tells us that a Hauranite who now owns *five* yoke of oxen is held to be a man of station and opulence ; "*five hundred* yoke" would make a prince of him. As these oxen are, and were, mainly used for ploughing, Job must have held a large landed estate. The "seven thousand sheep" imply, of course, that he was a wealthy sheep-master, as well as a farmer on a large scale. The "three thousand camels" imply, probably, that he was also a princely merchant, sending out large caravans to trade in the cities and among the tribes of the East,—as perhaps we might also infer from the frequent references to these travelling caravans in the body of the Poem. The "five hundred she-asses" confirm the impression of vast wealth,—the she-ass being esteemed to be far more valuable than the male, because of the milk she yielded ; this milk, then as now, being greatly prized in the East. The word rendered "household," and in the margin of our English Bible "husbandry," is of somewhat dubious import ; but probably indicates that, for the various uses of

trade and agriculture, Job possessed a vast retinue, a large clan, of ploughmen, shepherds, camel-drivers, with their guards, overseers, traffickers, and scribes. If we combine the several items of this enumeration we can well understand how Job may have been reckoned the greatest prince among the *beni-Kedem*, or "Sons of the East,"—a name given to the Arab tribes on the east of Palestine, all of whom claimed, as they still claim, to be Abrahamides, *i.e.* the sons of Abraham; the vast "motley race," as Jeremiah calls them, who haunted the wide tracts stretching from Egypt to the Euphrates. We should emphasize the fact, too, that Job, by the very catalogue of his possessions, is shewn to be not a mere nomad, like many of these Sons of the East. Obviously he had a large settled estate, cultivated by his slaves and the freemen of his clan. The Hauran is still covered with the ruins of ancient cities. And from the constant allusions in the Poem to "the city," the nobles of which did him reverence, and to "the gate" in which he sat and administered justice, gave counsel in emergencies, his lightest word or look being eagerly caught up and deferred to, we may be sure that his estate lay in the immediate vicinity of a populous city, if it did not include it.

Verse 4.—Job seems to have been singularly happy in his children. His seven sons each had "his day" for entertaining the rest, whether that day were his birthday, and so occurred only once in the year, or one of the seven days in the annual feasts held in spring and again in autumn, or whether, as seems most probable, it was a day in every week. In any case it is obvious that they

lived together in a frank brotherly way. That they invited their three sisters to their feasts implies that there was nothing riotous or excessive in their mirth. And the fact that, on the day on which they all perished while attending the banquet of the first-born, the sheep were out at pasture and the oxen ploughing in the fields, seems to indicate that the feasting was no interruption to the regular work of the estate ; that the banquet, then as now, was given only toward the close of the day. The inference is confirmed by another fact, or, rather, by a reasonable deduction from it. It seems probable that the day on which, "early in the morning," Job assembled his sons for purification and worship, was also the day on the evening of which his eldest son entertained his brothers and sisters in his house ; for he had seven sons, and if each of these "had his day" every week, as the best commentators think they had, clearly the whole week, or at least every evening in the week, would be occupied by the seven banquets ; so that Job would be compelled to take the morning of one of those days for his solemn act of worship, and would probably take the first of the week, the day of the first-born. So much, indeed, seems implied in the phrases of the next verse,—*"early in the morning,"* and, *"when the days of the banquet had gone round."* But if this be so, then the children of Job perished on the very day on which, by sacrifice and worship, they had been purged from all sin. When could they have died more happily ?

It is notable, however, that Job himself did not attend these banquets ; for it indicates that there

was real mirth at them—a mirth and gaiety more suitable to the young than to the aged. It is also notable that though he did not austere frown on them, he watched these festivities with some anxiety, lest any sin should blend with and contaminate the mirth. We are not therefor to conceive of him, however, as fearing any grave outward sin, any immorality; for he knew what the training of his sons had been, and how well-disposed they were, and how truly they loved each other. But he does seem to have feared lest, even if they should escape

“such wanton, wild, and usual slips
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty,”

they might at times let their merriment run to excess, and that, in the gaiety of their hearts, they might forget the Giver of all good, or even cherish the persuasion that a life of self-enjoyment was better than a life of duty and obedience.

No doubt this incident of the constantly recurring banquets is inserted into the Story—from which so much is necessarily left out—not only, nor mainly, to pave the way for a subsequent incident, and to shew us how easily and naturally all Job's children might be carried off at one fell swoop; but also, and chiefly, to indicate how perfect and vigilant was the piety of Job, and to supply us with one of the many forms it assumed.

Verse 5.—When the week of banquets was ended, Job invited his sons to his own house that he might “hallow” or “sanctify” them, *i.e.* see and cause them to go through the ceremonial ablutions by which men in the earliest ages prepared

themselves for worship : for *Job's* day was a holy day, a day devoted to God, whether it were, as some suppose, the seventh day of the week, or, as others with more probability conjecture, the first day of the week. That no hint of "the sabbath" is given here is another indication of the non-Hebraic, the catholic, tone of the Book. And still another such indication is to be found in the form of Job's sacrifice. "Whole burnt offerings," offerings in which the whole victim was consumed in the fire, were as familiar in the patriarchal age to the non-Israelitish tribes of the East as to the Israelites themselves, as we may learn from the colloquy of Balak with Balaam recorded in Numbers xxiii. and in Micah vi. 5-8 ; so that there is no allusion even to the Hebrew ritual in this description of the sacrifice by which Job purified his sons. Strictly patriarchal and un-Jewish, moreover, is the fact that Job was his own priest, the priest of his family ; that the right and power to offer sacrifice are here regarded as a function of mere fatherhood, that as yet we find no trace of a sacerdotal caste.

It should be observed, too, before we quit this verse—for it is very strange and curious—that the sin into which Job feared his children might have fallen is the very sin to which he himself was tempted and from which he escaped only by the skin of his teeth. "Haply, my sons have sinned *in renouncing God* in their hearts." What might have been a momentary and half-unconscious treason in them threatened to become a deliberate and fatal treason with him. And this very fear of Job for the fidelity of his sons indicates, I think, that even

before his trial he had been debating in his own heart whether human goodness was not very much a matter of habit, whether it was real and would bear a severe strain, and that he had felt there was much in the providence of God both to quicken and to feed such a doubt. Why should he have dreaded lest his children should fall into this special sin had he not felt that there were doubts in the air and temptations—speculations rife among the younger and more thoughtful men of the tribes perhaps—which laid them specially and perilously open to it?

Verses 6–12.—That this question of the genuineness, the reality and power, of human virtue may be determined once and for ever, the scene is changed, and we are admitted into the Cabinet of Heaven. It is a highday and holiday even there. Just as the sons of Job were gathered in their father's house below, so, above, the sons of God, the ministers who do his will, the thousands who

“at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest,”

as well those who “serve” as those who only “stand and wait,” are gathered round the Father of an infinite Majesty. And with, or among, them comes one who is here designated the “Adversary,” or the “Accuser,” *i.e.* the calumniator and detractor.¹ The Arabs call this strange hostile being the “busy one;” St. Peter calls him the “peripatetic” (1 Peter v. 8)—names which well accord with the description of him here put into his own mouth. In some respects

¹ The word “Satan” is not used in the Book of Job as a proper name, as an appellation, although in our Translation it is so used for the sake of clearness, but only as an epithet.

he is, no doubt, or seems to be, less malignant and less potent than the "devil" of later speakers and authors; but there can be no doubt, I think, that we are to identify the "Adversary" of Job with the "Satan" of subsequent Scriptures; with, for example, the Satan whom our Lord Himself charged with having bound an infirm woman, "lo, these eighteen years;" with the Satan who defeated, or hindered, St. Paul's friendly intention of visiting the Thessalonians "once and again," and whose "messenger, sent to buffet him," the same Apostle recognized in his "thorn," or "stake" rather, in the flesh. Nor can there be any doubt that throughout Scripture the existence of myriads of holy spirits, called into being before the creation of the physical universe, who delight to do the will of God, is either assumed or affirmed: or that the existence of an evil and malignant spirit, who seeks to thwart the kind and holy will of the God whom he once obeyed, is implied or even expressly asserted. How far the dramatic representation of this scene in heaven is to be taken as historical is an open question, though it should be remembered that similar scenes are described in other and later books of Scripture, even to the last. (1 Kings xxii. 19-22; Zech. iii. 1, 2; Rev. xii. 9.) But, as Professor Davidson has pointed out,¹ this noble passage will have been written in vain, at least for us, unless we gather from it some such general conceptions as these:—That all the powers of the universe, whether physical or spiritual,

¹ I am indebted for the substance of the rest of this paragraph to a fine passage in Professor A. B. Davidson's Commentary on Job, though I have ventured to condense and vary the expression.

whether good or evil, whether their intents be wicked or charitable, are in the hand of God, and subserve the good pleasure of his will: that there is no eternal dualism, no power capable of engaging the Maker and the Ruler of the universe in an endless conflict or of ultimately thwarting his designs. That there are pure and happy spirits who, sent by Him, conduct men through this scene of trial and education, ministering to their inward and deepest needs; and that there is an evil spirit, himself a son of God by nature and memory, though not by love and moral determination, who, while he seeks to thwart God and injure men, is compelled to work together with the other sons of God for the ultimate fulfilment of the Divine will, for the ultimate good of man even, and for the ultimate extermination of that sin which he himself perhaps originated. We shall fail to grasp the principles which underlie this dramatic picture unless we are taught by it that the fortunes of men possess an absorbing interest for the inhabitants of heaven; that moral problems are being wrought out here unlike any which have been solved there: and that, therefore, they follow the fluctuations of our fate with a divine curiosity and sympathy of which we have but a faint conception. As our struggles are of the profoundest interest to them, so their goodwill or their malevolence tell upon us, and further or delay the issue of the conflict. No, this little human world of ours does not float through space isolated and neglected, unrelated to the vast yet orderly system of the universe. It is attracted by the larger orbs around it and trembles under their perturbations. Good angels

and evil angels hold us full in view. We may suffer at times for their sake as well as for our own, even as also at times they bring us a spiritual force beyond our own. For a few brief years man passes across the face of the earth ; but above him there bends a broad heaven, not cold and hard and careless, but full of tender love and eager ministries ; and beneath him there yawns a hell, crowded with hostile and malignant spirits who would fain make him as selfish and as miserable as themselves : while above all, and through all, and in all, God reigns and works, compelling even the disasters and defeats of the conflict to minister to the completeness and glory of the final triumph.

Assuredly nothing in this Scene in Heaven is more noble and touching than the pride, so to speak, which God takes in the good man, the confidence He reposes in him. Whether with or without some purpose of mercy even for the Adversary himself, whether or not inviting him to consider Job, the perfect man, that he may also consider himself and “take a thought and mend,” Jehovah challenges Satan to consider Job, and how good he is, and how happy in his goodness. The way has been opened for the challenge by Satan’s report of himself. “Whence comest thou ?” asks Jehovah. And Satan replies, “From hurrying to and fro in the earth, and from pacing up and down in it.” According to the Hebrew idiom there is a certain pride and fidelity in the answer ; it implies that he has come from a strict and vigilant discharge of his proper function,—which function has a double aspect, that of rapid and widely-extended inspection, and that of searching

and accurate examination. Much of his original glory still clings to him. Obviously, at least to the mind of the man who wrote this Poem,

“his form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than archangel ruined.”

He mixes with the other “Sons of God” as their peer. He is evidently expected to present himself before the Lord when they do. No one questions his claim to a seat in the celestial Cabinet, not Jehovah Himself. He is addressed as one who has a right to be there. He speaks as one fully conscious of that right, fully conscious, too, that he has faithfully discharged the task assigned him. As we read these verses, we begin to suspect that there may be more in our Lord’s words than meets the eye when He said, *as though describing an event which had just taken place*, “I saw Satan, as lightning, cast out of heaven.”

And yet, when we read on, and learn that the function of the Adversary is to detect the sins and defects of men, that he has no faith in genuine goodness, that he is eager to do men harm and to rob them of the natural comfort and reward of their virtue, we cannot but believe that even now already he has said to himself and his compeers :

“But of this be sure,—
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labour must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil ;
Which oftimes may succeed so as perhaps
Shall grieve Him.”

To find evil in good is the very task to which the Adversary of this Poem devotes himself with zest. He hurries up and down the earth, like a spiritual detective, ever on the watch for signs of guilt. He has scrutinized even the perfect man with eyes which cast the shadows they discover, and has arrived at the conclusion that, devout and pious as the man seems, he is no less guilty than others, no less self-centred and selfish than he himself. When Jehovah calls Job to his mind, and, as it were, defies him to find any blemish in one so sincere and pure, his response is ready. Job has but the show of piety, not piety itself: he has discovered that to fear God and eschew evil is the best policy. Let Jehovah but put forth his hand and *touch*, *i.e.* smite, him, and he will disown, or renounce, God *to his face*, *i.e.* openly, shamelessly, insolently. As yet God has set a hedge, or fence, round all that he has, warding off all hostile attack and harmful influence. Who would not serve so liberal and munificent a Lord, and observe even the austere forms of piety, to become the greatest and richest of the Sons of the East?

Here, then, the true problem of the Book is fairly raised. Does Job serve God *for nought, without good reason?* is he capable of a disinterested goodness, an unselfish virtue? is the very question to be discussed and decided. In so far as it is a question between Jehovah and Satan it is speedily decided. "Job is good," affirms the Adversary, "only because of what he gains by it. Take away his gains, and he will fling his goodness after it." "Will he so?" replies Jehovah. "Take away his gains, then, and

let us see whether his goodness goes with or after them." Two sharp and decisive conflicts suffice to determine the issue of this brief but momentous campaign. In the first, Job's person is reserved from the power of the Enemy, and only his possessions are exposed to it. In the second, his life is reserved, but his person, his health, is exposed. And from this careful and exact limitation of the power of the Adversary we can hardly draw a lesser inference than this: That to the incursions of evil, as to the encroachments of the sea, God has set a bar and gates, and said, "Thus far mayest thou come, but no farther." It implies that good is before evil, and superior to it—at once more universal and more enduring; that "all things ill" are subservient to good, and will but swell the volume of its final triumph.

The first conflict and its issue are recorded in verses 13-22. It is impossible to read them without being struck by the immense range of power committed to the hands of the Adversary; or without suspecting that, by the permission of God, the prince of this world, who is also "the prince of the powers of the air," may have far more to do both with what seems to us the frequent cruelty of the great forces of Nature, and with the still deeper injuries which men often inflict on men, than we sometimes suppose. "A world so full of evils cannot be the work and domain of a Being at once good and almighty," says the modern sceptic, not discerning the good uses to which even evil may be put both here and hereafter. But our Poet is redeemed from such a misgiving by the conviction that evil may, and must, be compelled

to lead to greater good. Earth and heaven, man and nature, appear to conspire together against the perfect and upright patriarch the very moment God's "fence" round him, and round his house, and round all that he had, is removed; the lightning and the whirlwind are turned against him, no less than the cupidity of alien and freebooting tribes:

"One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow."

Nor can we well fail to note how the horror grows, how the successive strokes which fall on him gather weight, and break on him with accumulated force. First, the Sabæans fall on the oxen and carry them off; then fire flashes from heaven and consumes the sheep, at once more numerous and more widely spread than the oxen; then the still more costly and precious camels are "lifted" by the roving Chasdim; and, finally, the cruellest blow of all, rifling his heart of its most sacred treasures, his goodly sons and daughters are destroyed by "a great wind from beyond the desert." And all these blows are struck in a single day. Each messenger of evil enters on the scene while the previous messenger "was yet speaking;" and each concludes his tale with the pathetic words,—words rendered unspeakably more pathetic by so many repetitions,—
"and I am escaped, even I alone, to tell thee." In the morning of one and the selfsame day Job stands before us the greatest, richest, happiest of men, with his children round him, offering his sacrifice and thanksgiving to the God who has loaded him with benefits; and in the evening he lies on the ground, with rent mantle and shaven head, stripped of all,

naked as when he came from his mother's womb. To *him*, with his pious habitudes of thought, tracing all events, and in especial all the changes of human life, to the immediate hand of God, it must have seemed that God Himself had turned to be his enemy. To him, indeed, we know it *was* the Lord who had "taken away" all that He had given. And, therefore, it would have been nothing wonderful had Satan prevailed against him, and wrung from his despairing heart an emphatic renunciation of all faith and trust in the Friend who, without cause, had become his Foe. But we must examine these verses more closely.

Verse 13.—The day on which this terrible and increasing series of calamities fell upon him was the day of the first-born; probably, as we have seen, the very day on the morning of which Job had "sanctified" his children: and hence the very last day on which he could anticipate that the God whom he had propitiated, and with whom he felt at peace, would so darkly frown upon him.

On *Verse 14* Canon Cook remarks: "It is important to observe that the ploughing determines very precisely the season of the transaction. In the Hauran this takes place in January. This may account for the very frequent allusions to wintry weather,—cold, snow, ice, swollen streams, and violent storms—which occur throughout the Book, a coincidence which has strangely escaped the notice of commentators. It is also to be remarked that all the oxen were at the same time in one district: this too is curiously confirmed by the present custom of the Hauran: in order to protect themselves from

marauders the inhabitants plough the lands in succession, bringing all their oxen, with their guards, into the same district." An admirable and instructive note except at one main point. The curious "coincidence" which the commentators have so strangely overlooked is a very questionable one. It fails to make any allowance for the intervals which probably obtained—and these intervals are supposed to have been very considerable—between the first and second trial of Job, between the second trial and the arrival of the Friends, as also for the period consumed in their protracted argument with him. "The very frequent allusions to wintry weather" in the body of the Poem—and they are no more frequent than the similar allusions to summer and autumn—are to be accounted for, I think, not by the assumption that the whole drama was enacted in the month, or months, devoted to ploughing the land, but to the wish and intention of the Poet to paint a complete picture of life in the Hauran through all the changes of the year.

Verse 15.—The Sabæans were an Arabian tribe, of which the northern clans were nomadic, wandering through the whole district between Arabia and the Hauran, who lived mainly by plunder; while the southern clans dwelt in settled habitations, devoted themselves to commerce, and sent their caravans through the whole East. (Job vi. 18–20.) Strabo says that even the Sabæans of the south, although a rich mercantile people, made occasional raids for plunder in Petræa and Syria. And as it is likely that Job paid "blackmail" to the neighbouring tribes in order to save his lands from their incursions,

it is quite possible that his oxen were carried off and their guards slain by the more remote Sabæan clans. The fact that "the young men" of Job were "slain with the edge of the sword" implies that, then as now, the ploughmen of the Hauran were either armed, or protected by armed men, and that these "guards" of his incensed the freebooters by a desperate resistance.

Verse 16.—"A fire of God" (compare 2 Kings i. 10-14) can only mean lightning, I think; and although terrible storms are known in the Hauran, yet a thunder-storm which swept over the vast tracts on which seven thousand sheep found pasture, and which killed them *all*, and their shepherds, would inevitably be regarded as a portent, as the manifest "judgment" of an offended Heaven.

Verse 17.—The *Chasdim*, or Chaldeans, were originally robber hordes. They were probably the descendants of *Chezed*, who, like Uz, was descended from a nephew of Abraham named Nahor. They "retained their old seat and customs down to the time of Xenophon, and are now represented by the Kurds." In forming themselves into "three bands" they simply followed the habit which a little experience and reflection has commended to most freebooting tribes, especially when much ground has to be passed over. Thus divided they would find forage and water more easily; the attack would be more of a surprise and be more likely to cut off all possibility of escape; and the driving away of the cattle they had lifted would be at once more convenient and safer from pursuit than if the whole troop rode together. That robbers from two oppo-

site quarters, the distant South and the distant North, should fall on Job's possessions in a single day deepens our sense of the wide sweep of the calamity which broke so suddenly and destructively upon him. But the mere distance traversed by the hostile tribes presents no difficulty. The Arabs, once mounted and with the prospect of booty before them, care little how far they ride. Even at the present day their incursions often take as wide a range as that of the Sabæans into the Hauran from Southern Arabia, or that of the "bitter and hasty" Chasdim from the northern plains beyond Babylon.

Verse 18.—It is by comparing this verse with verse 13 that we are made sure that the whole series of calamities occurred within the limits of a single day, the day on which Job's "sons and daughters were eating, and drinking wine, in the house of their brother, the first-born."

Verse 19.—The "great wind" was evidently a cyclone, or whirlwind, since it smote "the four corners of the house" at once. We are told that it came from across, or beyond, the desert, in order that we may feel how far it had travelled, and what a mighty and voluminous force it had gathered as it flew. And we may safely assume, I think, that it was part of the same great convulsion in the forces of nature by which the sheep and their shepherds had been destroyed.

With this last overwhelming blow the tragic series comes to an end, at least for the present. The ruin of Job was completed by the third calamity, the "capture" of his immense stud of camels. But no loss of mere outward possessions wrings a single

word of complaint, or apparently a word of any kind, from his lips. With a stoicism and dignity such as many a living Arab sheikh would shew, but also with a pious and cordial acquiescence in the Divine will which only a life of tried and habitual faith can breed, he lets all go without so much as a sigh. It is only when, by the loss of his children, his heart is smitten and torn with an intolerable pang, that he "gives sorrow words." And what words they are! how simple and strong, and how pathetic in their simplicity!

"Naked came I from my mother's womb,
And I shall return thither naked,
The Lord gave and Lord hath taken ;
Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Under the impulse of deep emotion his words fall into metrical order and rhythm, as all impassioned speech is apt to do. Even the very gestures which express his grief have a certain stately order and self-restraint in them. He rends his mantle, tearing open his wide outer robe from the neck to the girdle—an act capable, of course, of being done passionately and impatiently ; but he also "shaves his head," an act only to be done deliberately and with care : he does not run wild and deafen heaven with his bootless outcries, like Lear ; but with a certain simple and stately dignity he hides his grief under the customary shows of mourning. Nay, more ; he "falls on the ground and worships," prostrating himself in the deepest and most solemn form of adoration known to man : thus silently and unconsciously, and therefore all the more nobly, refuting the charge of the Adversary that, when his gains

were gone, he would renounce the God who had ceased to be gracious to him.

And yet how much there was even in this first trial of his constancy to shake and betray it. He knew and felt that this destructive avalanche of loss and misery had not been set in motion by any sin which clamoured against him. He felt, and thought he knew, that it had been hurled on him by God, whom he had done nothing to offend. Both his consciousness of innocence and his conviction that his calamity came from God would render the trial a dark and inexplicable mystery to him. As he reflected on it, the mere sense of loss and dishonour, even his profound and irremediable grief for his children causelessly and prematurely snatched away from him, would be less painful than the questions and doubts suggested by so sudden, entire, and causeless a reversal of the usual course of Providence. It must have seemed to him as if the whole world of his established principles and convictions had dropped from under his feet, and he were left floating, *falling*, in a drear and fathomless abyss. But, happily for us and for him, under the most novel and terrible experiences men get the benefit of their past; they reap what they have sown. A life of real trust in God, of real fellowship with Him, connects us with Him by attachments so numerous, and strong, and vital, that no shock of change, no rush of doubt or rebellious passion, can sever them all. Because Job had really lived and walked with God, he could not be wholly sundered from Him, could not altogether lose his trust in Him even when God seemed to be doing him an unmerited and unspeak-

able wrong. Though his reason, stunned and reeling under so many swift and heavy blows, lost hold of God, his heart clung to Him, and went groping after Him if haply it might so find Him as to vindicate Him even to the inquisitive and sceptical intellect. And so, for a time, he brushes his doubts and fears aside, and refuses to let his faith be darkened, or more than darkened, by questions he cannot answer. If his head says, "I cannot find God or justify Him," his heart replies, "I am still sure of Him, and *must* trust in Him." Nay, even now already his heart begins to plead for God, and to justify his ways with men. It can say, not only, "Blessed be the Lord, though I do not comprehend Him," but also, "God has a *right* to take away what He has given, even though I can see no reason for his taking it away; the right to give implies the right to withhold or to withdraw." This is not a very profound solution of the difficulty indeed; but it is the deepest and best that Job can reach as yet. It is good so far as it goes, though it does not go very far. But, for the moment, it brought peace to the afflicted patriarch, and the power of worshipping a God he did not understand. And, surely, his noble humility and resignation yield a forcible rebuke to the intellectual narrowness which prompts us to demand that we should comprehend all the ways of Him who has the whole universe on his hands, and to the impatience which prompts us to expect an immediate solution of any problem which painfully affects our life and fate.

There would be no need to add another sentence on the first trial of Job were not this a convenient

opportunity for explaining the most difficult word in the whole Prologue. The word translated "blessed" in "Blessed be the Lord," &c. (verse 21), is the very word which is rendered "renounce," or "curse," in verse 11. That is to say, it is the very word which Satan had pledged himself to extract from the lips of Job. Now, as Job does use the word, it might seem that the Adversary had triumphed in his conflict with the Almighty. That conclusion, however, is rendered impossible by all the other indications of the Story. And, therefore, we need to remark that the Hebrew verb (*bârêk*) is used in a double sense. Usually signifying "to bless," it sometimes means "to curse." How the same word came to be used in senses so diametrically opposed can only be explained as we recall some well-known facts and laws of human speech.

Now, in general, we may say that, in *many* languages, the word which signifies "bless" also modulates into the very opposite sense of "curse." Some traces of this strange linguistic habit may be found in our own familiar talk, as when we say, lightly or angrily, "Oh, *bless* you!" meaning the exact opposite of what we say. And, perhaps, the explanation of this fact may be that all men, and especially the Orientals, shrink a little superstitiously from soiling their lips with words of evil omen and import, words of direct cursing, and prefer to express their anger and ill-will in words capable of a double sense. Many among ourselves who very willingly equivocate with an euphemism would recoil with horror from breaking out into open imprecations. Charles Lamb has pointed out a cognate fact, or habit, in the

use of impassioned language, in the lively lines in which he speaks of the—

“Irony and feign’d abuse
Such as perplex’d lovers use,
At a need, when in despair
To paint forth their fairest fair,
Or in part but to express
That exceeding comeliness
Which their fancies doth so strike,
They borrow language of dislike ;
And, instead of Dearest Miss,
Jewel, Honey, Sweetheart, Bliss,
And those forms of old admiring,
Call her Cockatrice and Siren,
Basilisk, and all that’s evil,
Witch, Hyena, Mermaid, Devil,
Ethiop, Wench, and Blackamoor,
Monkey, Ape, and twenty more ;
Friendly Traitress, loving Foe,—
Not that she is truly so,
But no other way they know
A contentment to express,
Borders so upon excess,
That they do not rightly wot
Whether it be pain or not.”

And hatred is only less ingenious than love, and is very capable of converting words and formulas of benediction to its own evil and malignant use.

More particularly we may say of this Hebrew word that its original meaning is “to bend the knee,” to kneel in prayer, for example: so that it would easily lend itself to a double and ambiguous sense, since if men kneel when they implore a blessing, they also kneel to invoke a curse.

But, most probably, the full explanation of the word as used in this Prologue is to be found in the fact that the subjects and courtiers of ancient Eastern princes knelt to them, not only when they entered

their presence, but also when they left it, even though they left it in anger and cherishing treasonable designs against them in their hearts. Hence the word for "kneel" came easily and naturally to contain the double meaning of saluting a person, especially a superior, both on meeting him and in parting with him, both on giving him up or renouncing him, and on welcoming him and wishing him good speed. We can hardly suppose that even the Adversary thought to drive Job to an extremity in which, like an angry drab, he would "unpack his heart with words" of cursing and blasphemy; still less can we suppose Job to have suspected his sons (for the same word is used, Chap. i. 5) of a sin so exceptional and so alien to all the habits in which they had been nurtured: but Job may well have feared that his sons, in their mirth and gaiety, would "take leave" of God, forget Him, renounce Him, by preferring their own ways to his, by taking "the primrose path of dalliance" rather than "the steep and thorny way to heaven;" and Satan may easily have persuaded himself that, when Job was stripped of all he had gained by serving God, he would revolt from his service, and at least tacitly renounce Him. But his hope is defeated. Job does, indeed, utter the very word that Satan had set himself to force from his lips, but he uses it in the good sense, not in the bad, in the very opposite sense, that is, to that in which the Adversary had predicted he would use it. So far from "taking leave" of God, or renouncing Him, he flies *to* God, not *from* Him, and renews his homage. "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God with wrong."

S. COX.

ON THE EPISTLES OF ST. PETER.

THE FIRST EPISTLE.

IN approaching the Epistles of St. Peter in order to compare their style and characteristics with those parts of the historical Books of the New Testament which have been before shewn to bear traces of St. Peter's influence, and in some cases to have come from his own lips,¹ we have to bear in mind that many of the features most prominent in historical writings must of necessity be wanting in epistolary compositions which aim solely (as the New Testament Epistles must do) at being didactic and hortatory. For such a comparison, moreover, St. Peter's writings would hardly be expected to supply much material. He possessed, as we have seen, the faculty of minute description, of graphic detail, in a singular degree; but the place for the exercise of this power is narrative, not exhortation. Still we believe that a careful examination of his Letters will furnish us with traces of the same pictorial style so abundantly seen in the "Acts" and in "St. Mark." His idiosyncrasy was so marked that it must leave its traces everywhere. We shall find that though he may not describe his mental pictures, yet in his words he is constantly shewing us how clearly they are before him. They influence his choice of language and make his epistolary composition of another kind from the rest of the Epistles in Holy Scripture. There are other indications in both Epistles that they are the work of the mind set before us in the Gospels and in the Acts, but it

¹ See THE EXPOSITOR, vol. ii. pp. 269-284, and vol. iii. pp. 264-282.
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will be convenient to examine this feature first. It seems also best to confine our observations for a while to the First Epistle. There have been questions raised about the genuineness and authenticity of the Second which will receive the best answer that an examination like the present can give them, if the marked characteristics of the two be discussed separately. The reader will then be able to look at each and say how far they deserve to be esteemed as the work of the same author.

A few examples will illustrate what has been said of the effect which St. Peter's graphic turn of mind seems to have produced on all his speech. In his exhortation to the younger brethren of the societies for whom he wrote he has a sentence (Chap. v. 5) which our Authorized Version renders "be clothed with humility." But these words, though perhaps the best that Translators could find, come far short of expressing all that is contained in the Greek *τὴν ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε*. The verb of this sentence, like so many other words in these Epistles, is found nowhere else in the New Testament, and is very uncommon anywhere. It is connected with a series of words which all imply *tight wrapping* or *rolling together*. The simplest of them, *κόμβος*, means a knot or roll of cloth made in tying or tucking up any part of the dress. It is also used of a pouch, or pocket, which such tucking up of the skirts might easily make. Another of the series, *ἐπικόμβια*, is applied to little packets of money tightly wrapped up, or tied, in bags, to be thrown among the people on certain feast days by the Byzantine Emperors and Patriarchs; while the noun from which

St. Peter's verb is immediately formed (*ἐγκόμβωμα*) is the name for a kind of over-dress used by slaves when engaged in any labour likely to be interfered with by their customary loose garments, by the wearing of which they might keep their usual clothes out of the way and clean. We are now in a position to grasp better the Apostle's graphic idea in using this word. In putting on humility as a garment of the nature described by his unusual expression, his hearers are exhorted not to employ that virtue as a loose flowing robe, so familiar to Oriental eyes and so readily laid aside, but as a tight close vesture, meant for wear and work, and which would suit with all the parts of their everyday life, and whose effect would be to keep more pure and stainless all the other portions of their character.

But St. Peter meant more than this. In his one word he has pictorially embodied a lesson which in other days had been given to himself. When he was writing we cannot doubt that his mind had called up that solemn scene on the evening of the Last Supper, when the assembled disciples were witnesses of the Lord's great practical sermon on humility. St. John records it (xiii. 4), but St. Peter played in the transaction a part which could never fade from his memory, and which his language in his Epistle shews to have been in his thoughts, for it almost exactly describes the action of the Lord. "Jesus riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself, . . . and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."

Now in his Epistle the Apostle has just couched his exhortation in these words: "All of you be subject one to another," and instantly his mind reverts to the form in which such teaching had fallen from his Lord's lips. "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." The scene is all before him in a moment, and he stamps the most noticeable feature of the whole on the next word of his exhortation, which in its fulness seems to say, "Wrap tight round you your humility, as my Lord wrapped the towel wherewith He was girded when He deigned to wash the feet of his disciples."

Such, then, is the form in which St. Peter's graphic power exhibits itself in his Epistles, and instances are not few in which we can trace it. In his exhortations his mind constantly becomes retrospective, and his recollections of what he is able to recall vividly supply him from time to time with single words in which we can detect the very set of circumstances that he had in his thoughts. Thus there can be little doubt when he speaks (Chap. i. 13) with another unique expression, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your minds," it is with his memory fixed on that exhortation of Jesus (Luke xii. 35), "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning," and with the vivid recollection of some marriage festivity to which the remark was well adapted, or, it may be, of some Passover feast wherein this preparation of the dress was ordained from its first institution.

Again, when the Apostle tells, a few verses earlier in the Epistle (Chap. i. 10-12), of the salvation which

is proclaimed in the Gospel, his thoughts revert at once to the day on which the great manifestation, whereof he himself was a partaker, was made, when "the Holy Ghost" was "sent down from heaven;" and, sensible of the wondrous gifts of the new dispensation, feeling how much more light had been shed on life eternal and on immortality by Christ's death and resurrection, he concludes,—“which things the angels desire to look into.” But *look into* is a feeble expression whereby to render *παρακύψαι*. In the Greek is pictorially expressed the bent body and the outstretched neck of one who is stooping and straining to gaze on some sight which calls for wonder. Now, except in St. James (Chap. i. 25), where the same word is used of the earnest gaze of the believer into the perfect law of liberty, *παρακύπτω* is employed only here and in the two accounts of the visit of Peter and John to the sepulchre on the morning of the resurrection. Both Evangelists (Luke xxiv. 12; John xx. 5) employ the same word, and its use is no doubt due to St. Peter's narration, which was given to the rest of the Apostles on their return. The word is exactly descriptive of what he had seen, as St. John went into the sepulchre before him, and was the most pictorial and expressive word he could apply to the bowed form and earnest gaze of his fellow-disciple as he stooped down and looked into the empty tomb. In that vacant grave John saw what angels had longed to see. Its vacancy was the seal of man's salvation, the beginning of the glories which followed the sufferings of Christ, the keynote of the gospel which

proclaimed, through that resurrection, the rising again of all the dead. In thought Peter seems by his word to have gone back to that scene by the grave of the Lord, and to have before him John's eager and astonished act and gaze while he bent down that his eyes might make themselves sure of the truth of such things as the angels desired to see.

In like manner St. Peter looks back to that interview with Christ which is recorded in St. John xxi. 15, 16, when he gives his exhortation to the elders (Chap. v. 2), "Feed the flock of God which is among you." Those to whom he speaks are in the same responsible position as himself. He reminds them of this and of the charge which it involves, and he knows no better way whereby he may fulfil the injunction laid upon him (Luke xxi. 32, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren") than to repeat to them, as nearly as they can be applied, the words of the command which Jesus aforetime gave to him.

Once more, there can be little doubt that the Apostle's thoughts were in that Gentile home, to which he in former times was sent for, in Cæsarea; that he was recalling the history of that man who had feared God, and had been working righteousness, when he speaks (Chap. i. 17) of the way in which God will hearken to every man's prayer: "If ye call on the Father, who *without respect of persons* judgeth according to *every man's work*, pass the time of your sojourning here *in fear*." The sentence is, as it were, a picture of the life of Cornelius described by himself in the Acts (Chap. x. 2). The mind of the Apostle

travels back to those former days and to the wondrous revelation by which his own prejudices had been swept away, when he learnt that, through the Gospel, all men were alike before God. On Cornelius and his house St. Peter had seen the Holy Ghost descend as on himself and his fellow-disciples at the beginning, and his first words then were the basis of his exhortation afterwards. For he opened his mouth and said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no *respector of persons*, but *in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness* is accepted with him."

We may see also a remembrance of his own inability to watch even a short time with his Master, when "the hour" of his enemies "and the power of darkness" arrived, in the earnest exhortations to watchfulness which he gives (Chap. v. 8) against the attacks of the devil.

But, above all things, he is never weary of reverting to the scenes of the passion and the resurrection of the Saviour. His great claim to be heard is that he is "a witness of the sufferings of Christ" (Chap. v. 1), and the lessons to be drawn from those sufferings are his constant theme. We can see a memory of his own faithlessness on that dread night as he records how it was the just Jesus who suffered for the unjust world (Chap. iii. 18); and the memory of his Lord, "put to death in the flesh but quickened by the Spirit," has prepared him who formerly denied his Master to be ready to follow Him now to prison and to death, when the time shall come for him to glorify God. We see this spirit break out continually in his appeals: "Forasmuch as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm

yourselves likewise with the same mind" (Chap. iv. 1); and, again, "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings" (Chap. iv. 13); and, once more, when his mind pictures the Lord on the cross praying, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," he shapes his exhortation to those who call themselves by Christ's name from his revived memories, and tells how men shall, after the Saviour's example, in their afflictions (Chap. iv. 19) "commit the keeping of their souls to God in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator."

But especially is the whole scene of Christ's trial and crucifixion put pictorially before us in the exhortation (Chap. ii. 19-24) to suffer patiently even when we are doing well. "What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently?" *Κολαφιζόμενοι* means "smitten with the palms of the hand," and having taken this one figurative word from the occurrences at the examination of Christ, the Apostle applies the whole example of the Lord as the type of what a Christian should expect to meet with and should strive to do. "Christ," he says, "suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps." The graphic character of these words we shall need to refer to afterwards: "He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously; who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." We can see that all the terrible events

are revived in the writer's mind with the utmost minuteness. The jeers and blows of the servants, the insolent scorn of the High Priest and his assessors, the silent submissive Jesus, are all as fresh before his eyes as on the day when the solemn tragedy was enacted. He uses also the unusual word *ξύλον* for the cross of Christ, a word which he employs in the same way in two of his addresses in the Acts of the Apostles (Chap. v. 30, x. 39). But it is the word *stripes* that, perhaps above all the rest, betrays to us the eye-witness of all which he is narrating. The Greek word *μώλων* is here employed in the singular, and is found nowhere else in the New Testament. It means the *bruise*, or *wale*, which rises under the skin, and is charged with blood, after a severe blow. Such a sight we feel sure, as we read this descriptive passage, St. Peter's eyes beheld on the body of his Master, and the flesh so dreadfully mangled made the disfigured form appear in his eyes like one single bruise. And what he saw he has tried to depict in the figurative and unique word which he has written down for us.

But his whole Epistle is full of the like graphic touches, and in consequence abounds with words which are never, or very rarely, used by the other sacred writers. The pictorial word employed in the description (Chap. v. 8) of Satan going about as a roaring lion (*ὡρνόμενος*) is found nowhere else in the New Testament, but is just the word we should expect from the writer, who, as we believe, reminded St. Mark that Christ in his temptation "was with the wild beasts." The same observation applies to the Apostle's language (Chap. iv. 1) in the exhortation to imitate

Christ. The bold metaphor, "Arm yourselves with the same mind," is like St. Peter, but unlike the other writers of the New Testament. In Chap. ii. 16 we come upon another unique word where the Apostle is dealing with the misuse of Christian liberty. "Use not liberty for a *cloke* of maliciousness." Ἐπικάλυμμα, the word of the Original, is literally a veil, whereby the face, or anything else, may be shrouded so that the true expression or character of what is behind may be unnoticed. St. Peter feels that Christian freedom pushed too far may tend to license and yet the profession of Christianity be urged as an excuse for it, and his pictorial mind fixes on such a state the graphic name of a mask, or veil, employed to hide the real countenance behind it.

In the preceding verse (Chap. ii. 15) is another of these striking words, "Put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." The verb φιμώ is from a noun signifying a *muzzle*, or *nose-band*. The primary use of the contrivance was to prevent dogs from biting or calves from sucking. How much vigour is imparted to the Apostle's language when this figure of his is appreciated! Well-doing is the means which the Christian is to employ against his opponents, and at the sight of it they shall become tongue-tied and powerless for harm. They cannot bite, for they are muzzled by what they behold in the conduct of the servants of Christ. The Greek word is rarely used in its metaphorical sense, but is more frequent in St. Mark than elsewhere in Scripture. It is the word which Christ used in his address to the raging sea (Mark iv. 39), and, more strikingly in accord with the passage in St. Peter's Epistle, when our Lord employs it (Mark

i. 25) against the unclean spirits, saying, "Hold thy peace" (literally, be muzzled), "and come out of him."

As the last word carried us back to St. Mark's Gospel, so some of the figurative words which the Apostle uses have their counterpart in the language of the Acts, which the Apostle is recorded to have employed. Such is his use of *σκολιός*, which he applies, in his First Epistle (Chap. ii. 18) to the character of masters in their dealings with their servants. The word is primarily used of material things which are crooked and awry, such as a twisted piece of wood. When we know this, we see at once what the Apostle means by those whom our Translation calls *froward* masters. They are men of a distorted and perverse nature, with whom no reasoning would avail, but who would ever do things contrary to all fairness and justice; yet even to these the Christian servant is urged to submit. The word is one which the Apostle employs in the exhortation which follows his Pentecostal sermon (Acts ii. 40): "Save yourselves from this *untoward* generation;" a passage which St. Paul seems to have had in his mind when he wrote Philippians ii. 15, in which place alone, except in the language of St. Peter, is this metaphorical use of the word found in the New Testament. Another example which carries us to the language of the Acts occurs in the exhortation to brotherly love (Chap. i. 22): "Love one another with a pure heart, *fervently*" (*ἐκτενῶς*). But the figurative word in the Greek says much more than the English. It speaks of a continuous strain and labouring for the accomplishment of this duty. The heart is to be, as it were, on the rack till it fulfil

its work. St. Peter has himself taught us what he means by it, for he uses the kindred adjective in the description of his imprisonment (Acts xii.) by Herod. There he says, "Prayer was made *without ceasing* (ἐκτενῆς) of the Church unto God for him." He again applies the word to the description of charity (Chap. iv. 8), where *fervent* is also the English rendering. Now both adjective and adverb are words peculiar to St. Peter among the writers of the New Testament.

Any attempt to give an idea by translation of the vigorous and expressive character of some of the words which he alone uses is hopeless. No readable version could be made, if we were to give the full force of the Original. But as many of them illustrate the peculiar character of St. Peter's diction, it is worth while to call attention to them. Such a word is ἀνάχυσις, used (Chap. iv. 4) of the *excess of riot* . It implies any lavish outpouring, especially such as would be made by the rising of a high tide, which in retiring leaves behind it a number of puddles. Nobody but St. Peter ventures to employ so bold a metaphor. No single English word can give the full force, but that force, when realized, is pictorial, and like much else in St. Peter's style. Similar words are found where he speaks (Chap. ii. 2) of babes *just born* , and in the same verse of the *guileless unadulterated* milk of the word. In Chap. ii. 21, ὑπογραμμὸς, the word employed to describe Christ as our *example* , is really the copyhead set before the schoolboy for his imitation, and the metaphor, when appreciated, shews that the notion of St. Peter was that, like the pupil at his copy, we should need re-

peated endeavours before we could hope to approach to a likeness of the Exemplar, but also holding out the blessed hope that our unwearied efforts would be crowned by a nearer resemblance to what we have striven to copy. The plaiting (ἐμπλοκή) of the hair, and the (ἐνδυσις) putting on of apparel (Chap. iii. 3) are both words peculiar to this Epistle, and have been chosen by St. Peter, we can hardly doubt, because they give, in the Original, a graphic suggestion of great pride and exultation in the adornment, far more than is represented by our Translation. Excess of wine (Chap. iv. 3) is in the Greek only one word; also ἀπαξ λεγόμενον, which sets before us the terrible picture of a man who has drunk till he can drink no more; he has become like a vessel full to running over. A single word (Chap. iv. 15) says all that we render by *a busybody in other men's matters*, and indicates a man peeping, spying, and overseeing everybody's business but his own. It is a word which no other writer has used, as is also the title *Arch-Shepherd*, applied to Christ in Chap. v. 4.

The number of such unique words, and all of them partaking largely of the graphic character, in the Epistle is very considerable.¹ But we have adduced instances enough to establish our position that, as in the Gospel of St. Mark and in the Acts, the descriptive power of St. Peter distinguished his utterances

¹ We might have enlarged our list by adding,—

ἀναγεννάω (Chap. i. 3),	ἀνεκλάλητος (Chap. i. 8),
ἀμαράντινον (Chap. v. 4),	πατροπαράδοτος (Chap. i. 18),
ἀμάραντον (Chap. i. 4),	ὑπολιμπάνω (Chap. ii. 21),
συνέλεκτος (Chap. v. 13),	

and should not then have exhausted the examples of such words which are found in this Epistle.

from all the rest of the Histories, so in this Epistle we have a similar graphic character exhibited, as far as it can be in such a composition, and that the peculiar turn of St. Peter's mind has made itself felt here by his large employment of words which serve his purpose for giving verbal pictures, but which are not found in the language of other New Testament writers.

But, leaving the consideration of single words, we may see in whole passages how the tendency to realize complete scenes betrays itself, both in the Apostle's own language and where he is quoting what has most impressed him. Look, for an example, at the picture of Satan given in Chap. v. 8. He is an enemy against whom you must never remit your watchfulness ; he is a roaring lion, who goes to and fro, with an ever-greedy appetite, seeking out whom he may gorge down. In opposition to such a foe the Christian must stand firmly fixed on the foundation of his faith, which nothing can shake, but which is *sure* (*στερεός*) as the foundation of God, of which the same word is employed 2 Tim. ii. 19. Again, when alluding to Christ in his glory (Chap. iii. 22), he is evidently painting what in part his bodily eye has seen, and what his mental vision has figured as a fitting sequel of the triumph of the Ascension. Christ "is at the right hand of God, having gone away into heaven, while angels and principalities and powers are all ranged in subjection beneath him." The slight expansions which have been given to these two quotations are fully warranted by the Original, and shew how graphically the whole, as a picture, was before the mind's eye of the writer.

And when he quotes, we may see that passages of a like nature are those which dwell with him and come most readily to his tongue. It is on "the stone which the builders refused, and which is become the head of the corner," that he dwells, both in this Epistle (Chap. ii. 7) and in his address to the High Priest and his party (Acts iv. 11) after the arrest of himself and St. John, which followed close on the cure of the cripple at the Temple Gate ; a passage which is further to be noted because it forms a close link between the language of the Acts and that of the Apostle's letter. And what could we find more in the character of St. Peter's own diction than the quotation with which the first chapter of this Epistle is brought to an end ? "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away ; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever." But we have dwelt long enough on the graphic character of all that the Apostle utters, let us turn now to another peculiarity.

In the examination of St. Peter's utterances, as recorded in the historical Books of the New Testament, we found that a most noteworthy feature was the absence of all attempts at argument. The character of the man in this respect is exactly portrayed in his language (Acts iv. 20) to the chief priest, who charged him for the future to be silent, and cease to preach in the name of Jesus : "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." And we find just the same spirit animating the whole of the First Epistle, and almost making its appearance in express words. In Chap. iii. 15 the exhortation of

the Apostle is, that Christians should "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh a reason of the faith" that is in them ; but it is to be no more than an answer. It is to be without debate, in meekness and in fear ; and it is by the sight of a consistent walk, a good conversation in Christ, and not by many words, that those who malign are to be put to shame.

And the whole Epistle abounds with what was so eminently conspicuous in all we know of St. Peter's teaching, that whatever was learned should be carried out at once into action. Even at the outset of the Epistle (Chap. i. 2), where he is speaking of the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, whereby the brethren are "elect according to the foreknowledge of the Father" (a passage which is a reproduction in part of the very words which he used in Acts ii. 23), such sanctification must have its result in the life, and be shewn by obedience. So the knowledge of Christ is to have a like practical issue (Chap. i. 15): "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." Those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious are to make manifest their appreciation of this blessing by a change of conduct, by becoming as those little children from whom the Apostle had seen his Master so often deduce his lessons; they must (Chap. ii. 1) "lay aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisies, and envies and all evil speaking." And after the 10th verse of this second chapter almost the whole of the Letter is occupied with exhortations to personal religion, which is to manifest itself by outward good deeds, and so to produce

its effect both in silencing gainsayers and winning new converts. "Abstain from fleshly lusts," for they "war against the soul." Shew an honest conversation to the heathen, "that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." Such religion as this is not only to make men fear God, but honour the king, submit themselves to all ordinances of the community to which they belong, respect their neighbours, and love the brotherhood. And then, leaving general exhortations, the Apostle descends to particular cases. The duties of household servants (Chap. ii. 18) to their masters, of wives to their husbands (Chap. iii. 1), and of husbands to their wives (Chap. iii. 7), are dealt with in the spirit which is not content with knowledge only, but must carry knowledge into practice. And in like manner does he lay down the most useful rules of behaviour (Chap. v. 1-5) to guide the elders in their oversight of the flocks committed to their charge, and the younger brethren in the humility with which it is their duty to yield to authority. The whole tone of these lessons is what we should expect from the eager impetuous disciple who was always ready both with hand and tongue to give a practical turn to whatever was set before him. True, the spirit is more chastened than of old, for the man has a memory of many shortcomings, and is moreover filled full of the Holy Ghost. But the old ardour, the ancient impulsiveness, the former boldness, are all there, sanctified indeed by large gifts of grace and many trials, but instinct with the

fire and life of the man who stands out among the Apostolic band as foremost in everything that was to be said or done.

There is also another peculiarity in this Epistle which betrays the character of the writer as we have observed it in the History. There we found that St. Peter was a man whose eyes were always open, and who let nothing escape his observation. And what he saw he remembered and was ready to act upon. We should naturally expect such a person, in writing a letter, to make *sight* the great vehicle of instruction, and to put into a most prominent place that faculty which played so large a part in his own life. And this is just what we do find. The Apostle, who himself was always on the alert to see, takes it for granted that others will be like him; and having profited so greatly himself by the sights which he had been allowed to witness, he is never weary of telling how he has been influenced in this way. The sight, and what it should do and will reap, fills a great space in St. Peter's Letter. The salvation of which he speaks is to be such as can be observed, it is ready (Chap. i. 5) to be revealed in the last time. It is the desire of angels (Chap. i. 12) to *look* into the Gospel of Christ. It is the great blessing of the New Dispensation that under it Christ (Chap. i. 20) in these last times was *made manifest*. It is by *beholding* the good works (Chap. ii. 12) of the followers of Christ that unbelievers are to be won to love the truth. It is one of the purposes of Christ's coming that He might leave us *an example* (Chap. ii. 21), that we might see his footsteps and prepare our-

selves to walk in them. Husbands are to be brought to the faith (Chap. iii. 2) by *seeing* the chaste conversation of their Christian wives. It is because the Apostle himself was a *witness* of the sufferings of Christ (Chap. v. 1) that he exhorts his fellow-elders to take earnest *oversight* of the flocks committed to them, that they may be prepared to welcome the *appearance* of the Chief Shepherd when He shall come again; and this *revelation of the glory of Christ* is that to which not only they, but all who are partakers of the sufferings of Christ (Chap. iv. 13), are to *look forward*. Besides this, the Original has many words which bespeak the same turn of mind in the writer, though the allusions are almost of necessity obscured in a translation. Thus "the day of visitation" (Chap. ii. 12) is literally the day of (ἐπισκοπή) "*looking upon*," the time when God shall look upon these wanderers as a pastor over his flock, and, shall become the *overlooker* (ἐπίσκοπος), the *bishop* of their souls. So, again (Chap. v. 3), the elders are exhorted to be (τύποι) *types* to their flocks; they are to shew by all their actions that they bear the stamp of the Divine Master upon them, so that all may take knowledge of them, as they had done aforetime of Peter himself (Acts iv. 13), that they have been with Jesus. Once more the English Version of Chap. iii. 13, "Who is he that will harm you if ye be *followers* of that which is good?" loses much of the idea of which the Greek μιμηταὶ is so full. This implies not merely followers, but the very closest imitators. It is a word connected with the same root as our English *mimic*, only

unfortunately, through the tendency of language to degenerate, our word carries with it an evil tinge of mockery and ridicule. But this is utterly absent from the Greek, which signifies that close copying which would only be bestowed for a worthy end and on a worthy object. The Christian's life is to be a constant watch and labour, that his actions may be brought ever nearer and nearer into the resemblance of that which is good.

All these expressions, comprised as they are within so brief a Letter, bespeak a writer of the keenest observation of all that was around him, while they point, as the whole of St. Peter's life had pointed, to the practical end toward which all such observation is to be directed. They harmonize precisely with what we have seen in the Gospels and the Acts to be the most noteworthy features of the Apostle's character.

There is no lack of other matter in the Epistle which might be used to enforce the evidence we have put forward. We might point out how this Apostle (who, above all things, was a Jew, and whose Judaizing tendencies called forth the censure of his fellow Apostle) keeps up that character in the Letter before us. How he rejoices in drawing his illustrations from Jewish traditions such as those connected with the histories of Noah and of Sarah, and how the memory of the old Jewish economy shews itself in his language when he employs such a word as *ῥαντισμὸς* (Chap. i. 2), *sprinkling* (only found elsewhere in the New Testament in Heb. xii. 24, an Epistle wherein everything partakes of a Jewish turn of thought), in speaking of the salvation which Christ's

death has purchased and of its application to the souls of men. We might have dwelt on his duplication of terms and his great wealth of epithets,—features of language which, in epistolary writing, most naturally take the place which in narrative composition is given to description. Such instances are to be found in his "*strangers and pilgrims*" (Chap. ii. 11); a *lamb without blemish and without spot* (Chap. i. 19); *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people* (Chap. ii. 9); and when he speaks (Chap. i. 4) of the inheritance *incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away*, but is *reserved in heaven*; and again (Chap. ii. 4) of the *living stone, disallowed of men, but chosen of God, precious*: and many others of a like character. But enough has been said to make it clear that the same peculiar features which the Gospels and Acts set before us in the language and character of St. Peter are also to be found in this Epistle. The object of the present paper has been to bring out this fact with somewhat greater distinctness than is possible by a mere examination of the English Version. It remains that we endeavour to demonstrate that, in the Second Epistle, there may be traced these same distinctive characteristics, and that we may therefore claim for it, what is not always accorded, the same degree of acceptance as for this First Epistle. Whether this undertaking be as hopeless as some have supposed, it will be the purpose of another paper to investigate.

J. RAWSON LUMBY.

*ST. LUKE AND ST. PAUL:**AN INQUIRY INTO THEIR MUTUAL RELATIONS.*

THE chief object of this paper is to illustrate the influence of the professional character of the "beloved physician" on the thoughts and language of the later Epistles of St. Paul. It is assumed that the long-continued and intimate companionship implied in the Acts, which are traditionally ascribed to St. Luke (Acts xvi. 10; xx. 5; xxviii. 16), and in the casual references in three of St. Paul's Epistles (Col. iv. 14; Philem. verse 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11), would render such an influence antecedently probable. In proportion as we are able to trace it in coincidences that are obviously undesigned, beyond the reach even of the most consummate art, the probability assumes more and more nearly the character of a certainty, and it imparts some measure of that certainty to the inference already drawn as to the companionship. That the coincidences are thus undesigned is patent from the fact that St. Luke (assuming for the present his authorship of the Acts and of the Gospel that bears his name) nowhere informs us, directly or indirectly, of his calling, and that we know it only from a casual mention of his name by the Apostle.

As a preliminary inquiry, however, it may be well to note the phenomena in the writings ascribed to the physician which, though they do not directly indicate his calling, at least fall in with it and are best explained by it. Assume such an one coming into contact with the cycle of events and the circle of persons connected with the ministry of Jesus,

and the early years of the Church which took its name from Him, and it is hardly conceivable that his way of looking on them should not have been, in some measure, determined by his technical culture, by the opportunities which his calling gave him, by the habit of observation which that culture and calling had formed and fashioned in him. Mr. Browning's wonderful poem, "An Epistle of Karshish the Arab physician,"¹ in which he represents one of the same calling suddenly, in the course of his travels, coming across the case of Lazarus as one transcending all his past experience, may

¹ The poem should be read as a whole ; but as it is probable that the volume containing it may not be in the hands of many readers of THE EXPOSITOR, I may, perhaps, be allowed to put together a few of its more striking passages :—

"Some elders of his tribe, I should premise,
Led in their friend, obedient as a sheep,
To bear my inquisition. While they spoke,
Now sharply, now with sorrow,—told the case,—
He listened not except I spoke to him,
But folded his two hands and let them talk.

* * * * *

And oft the man's soul springs into his face
As if he saw again and heard again
His sage that bade him 'Rise,' and he did rise.
Something, a word, a tick of the blood within
Admonishes : then back he sinks at once
To ashes, who was very fire before,
In sedulous recurrence to his trade
Whereby he earneth him the daily bread ;
And studiously the humbler for that pride,
Professedly the faultier that he knows
God's secret, while he holds the thread of life.
Indeed the especial marking of the man
Is pure submission to the heavenly will—
Seeing it, what it is, and why it is.

* * * * *

He will live, nay, it pleaseth him to live
So long as God please, and just how God please.

be allowed, in its dramatic truth and vividness, to illustrate the impression which analogous phenomena would make on the mind of the Italian freedman who bore the name of Luke.¹ Such a writer, more familiar with the form and substance of Greek literature than any other writer of the New Testament, must, from the nature of the case, at least be credited with a knowledge of the current phraseology of the medical schools of the time, and

He even seeketh not to please God more
(Which meaneth, otherwise) than as God please.

* * * * *

This man so cured regards the curer, then,
As—God forgive me!—who but God himself,
Creator and Sustainer of the world,
That came and dwelt in flesh on it awhile !
Sayeth that such an one was born and lived,
Taught, healed the sick, broke bread at his own house,
Then died, with Lazarus by, for aught I know,
And yet was . . . what I said, nor choose repeat,
And must have so avouched himself, in fact,
In hearing of this very Lazarus.

* * * * *

The very God ! think, Abib ; dost thou think ?
So, the All-great were the All-loving too,—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, ' O heart I made, a heart beats here !
Face, my hands fashioned, see in it myself,
Thou hast no power, nor may'st conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee !'
The madman saith He said so : it is strange."

¹ Lucas is, beyond all doubt, a contraction of Lucanus, and this suggests Lucania in Southern Italy as his birthplace. The inference becomes more conclusive when we take into account the obvious familiarity with Italian topography seen in the mention of Appii Forum and the Three Taverns in Acts xxviii. That he was a freedman may be inferred from the fact that well-nigh every physician in Italy belonged to that class.

of the text-books, such as the writings of Hippocrates, upon which the education given in them was based. Some of the examples of this phraseology are familiar enough to most students, but for the sake of making the inquiry complete, it will be necessary to note them briefly here. Thus we find him noting specifically the special combination of fevers (*πυρετοί*, as in Hippoc. *Αφῆ*. vii. 63, 64, the plural is obviously technical for "feverish symptoms") and a bloody flux¹ (*δυσεντερία*) from which the father of Publius suffered at Melita (Acts xxviii. 8), and using in relation to the generous gifts which it called forth the special word "honour" (*τιμή*), which, like our "honorarium," was applied to the payments made to those who practised a profession, and not a trade. So, again, in the healing of the cripple in the Temple (Acts iii. 7) he records with a technical precision which our English Version but partially represents that "his feet" (not the common *πόδες*, but *βάσεις*—a word used by Hippocrates, p. 637) "and ankle bones" (*σφυρά*) "were strengthened," the previous crippled state being due to the congenital imperfect development of the bones and tendons of the feet. So, in tracing the sequel of the miraculous healing, he twice dwells on the fact that the man leapt, not once only, but repeatedly, as if with a natural exultation and desire to test his newly-acquired power. (Acts iii. 8, 9.) So, again, as one who, as far as he could, made a point of inquiring into the history of each case of healing, he states that the paralysis of Æneas had lasted for eight years, and that for the whole of that period

¹ Hippocrates (*Αφῆ*. vi. 3) speaks of this combination as specially severe and dangerous.

he had been bedridden. (Acts ix. 33.) Assuming, what I hope to prove more fully by and by, that his relation to St. Paul was one which involved constant personal application of his professional skill, we can understand how he would register the fact that when he recovered from his temporary blindness there fell from his eyes as it had been the "scales" (*ὡσεὶ λεπίδες*) of the incrustation incidental to ophthalmia or other forms of severe inflammation of the eye-balls. (Acts ix. 18.) So, while an unscientific writer, say like St. Matthew, would have been content with describing St. Peter's vision as a dream (*ὄναρ*), he more technically sees in it a trance (*ἔκστασις*), and connects that "ecstatic" state with its natural antecedents in St. Peter's long-continued fasting, and probably his exposure in the exhausted condition thus brought on to the burning mid-day sun, at the fourth hour of the day, as it blazed down on the house-top to which he had withdrawn for prayer. (Acts x. 9, 10.) A Jew using the common language of Palestine would have simply spoken of the damsel at Philippi as having an unclean spirit, as possessed with a demon. St. Luke, though in compiling the narrative of his Gospel from Palestine records he uses the language which he found in them, in dealing with a case which came under his own observation uses a term which more naturally suggested itself to a Greek physician, and speaks of her as having "a spirit of Python," or Apollo, presenting phenomena identical with the convulsive movements and wild cries of the Pythian priestess at Delphi. (Acts xvi. 16.) One whose previous studies had made him acquainted with the

recorded cases of phthiriasis, such as those of Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Macc. ix. 9), Pheretima (Herod. iv. 205), and Sylla, and perhaps Herod the Great (Josephus, Ant. xvii. 15), would note with a special interest the addition of another instance in the death of Herod Agrippa as "eaten by worms," σκαληκόβρωτος. (Acts xii. 23.)

So, turning to his Gospel, we find that while the other Evangelists use the word *δυνάμεις* in a vague way as a synonym for miracles, St. Luke only speaks with a professional precision of the *δύναμις*, the "virtue" of the old medical writers (Hippoc. Ant. Med. c. 22), which seemed to him to be the instrument of healing, drawn from the person of Christ by the touch of faith. (Luke viii. 16, 17.) He alone recalls the words which naturally would come home to him with a special force, "Ye will surely say unto me this parable, Physician, heal thyself" (Luke iv. 23). Lastly, whatever view we take of the precise nature of the fact described, it was quite in accordance with his character that he should note that in the agony at Gethsemane "our Lord's sweat was, as it were, great drops" (θρόμβοι, clots, a definitely medical term) "of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke xxii. 44).

We enter on a more conjectural region, yet one in which the conjectures have at least the merit of giving a reasonable explanation of phenomena, when we connect St. Luke's work as a physician with the opportunities which he manifestly possessed, in a higher degree than others, in his work as an historian. What characterizes his Gospel and the Acts is (1) the information which he supplies as to the several members of the Herodian family,

Antipas and the two Agrippas, Manaen, Drusilla, and Bernice; and (2) his access to letters and documents, on the one hand, and, on the other, (3) his acquaintance with the names of the company of devout women who accompanied our Lord at least in his later journeyings, and ministered to Him of their substance. (Luke viii. 1 ; xxiv. 10.) It is, at any rate, probable that a skilled Greek physician living at Jerusalem or Cesarea would be eagerly sought out and welcomed by the official class at the seat of Roman government, and hardly less so by those whose position and active work must have made them conspicuous among the members of the Church of the Holy City, and the centre of whose reverence must, in the nature of things, have been found in the mother of the Lord they loved. Thus we may think of him as gathering from their lips every anecdote, if we may so speak of the facts of the Gospel, which was likely to dwell in the memories of such women—the love and the tears of the woman that was a sinner, the seven devils that had been cast out of Mary Magdalene, the pitying words spoken to the daughters of Jerusalem, the cry of the woman who burst out into the adoring exclamation, “Blessed is the womb that bare thee and the paps which thou hast sucked;” the raising of the son of the widow of Nain. Thus, also, we may think of him as obtaining the record, manifestly originally Aramaic, in which he has given us the Gospel of the Nativity, the recollections which lingered in that company of the saintly wife of Zacharias and the prophetess Anna, the daughter of Phanuel. From them too, and therefore ultimately from the mother of the Lord,

he may well have derived the genealogy which he inserts at the end of that record, and which, whatever view we take of its relation to that given by St. Matthew, is manifestly one which, running, as it does, through the line of natural descent, may well have been cherished side by side with that which traced the succession of regal inheritance in the home of Nazareth. When we remember that the Emmaus in Judea had, like its namesake in Galilee, a reputation for medicinal springs,¹ which might well have attracted to it the footsteps of the travelling physician, and that there, as elsewhere, he would naturally utilize every visit as an inquiry into the facts of the history which he had already planned and for which he was gathering materials, it is no bold assumption to think that we owe to such a visit the record, peculiar to his Gospel, of that walk to Emmaus, when the two disciples (of whom the one whom he names Clopas was probably his informant) felt their hearts burn within them as the risen Lord talked with them by the way and opened to them the Scriptures. (Luke xxiv. 18.)

Lastly, under this head, I would venture to note as at least characteristic of the kind of culture which medical education gives, the accuracy which we find both in the Gospel and the Acts in the report of details seemingly insignificant, and sometimes even in instances where it has required careful research on the part of modern criticism to ascertain that it was accurate. Thus, for instance, his notice of the στρατηγοὶ at Philippi as a Roman

¹ The very name, indeed (connected, as it is, with Hammath, "hot springs," or the more familiar Hammam), implied the reputation.

κολωνία, of the Proconsuls of Cyprus and Achaia, of the πολιτάρχαι of Thessalonica, and the ασιάρχαι of Ephesus, of the taxing of Cyrenius, and the synchronism of those who bore rule in Palestine at the commencement of our Lord's ministry, of the two Agrippas, and Drusilla, and Bernice, and Felix, and Festus, and John, and Alexander, as members of the Pontifical family, are, one and all of them, as any student will recognize, confirmed either by contemporary historians or by recently discovered inscriptions on coins and monuments. It is not, I think, fanciful to trace here also, and hardly less in the narrative of the shipwreck in Acts xxvii., the effects of that training which, in proportion to its completeness, habituates the mind to carefulness in observing and precision in recording.

I pass from this preliminary inquiry to that with which we are more specially concerned,—St. Luke's companionship with St. Paul. When that companionship began we have no direct record. The writer of the Acts appears for the first time, as indicated by the change from the third person to the first, on St. Paul's arrival at Troas, in what we call his second missionary journey. (Acts xvi. 10.) But it is clear that that was not the beginning of their friendship. The naturalness with which the transition is made, the absence of any mention of the circumstances that brought them together, forbid that assumption. It is therefore all but certain that they must have met at some earlier stage of St. Paul's ministry, possibly at Antioch or Tarsus. Both these cities stood high in reputation as seats of learning. Either was likely to attract a traveller

seeking knowledge in his special art. Leaving as doubtful the question where they had met before, the circumstances under which they now meet again have, if I mistake not, a special interest. The Apostle had been detained in Galatia by an attack of severe illness, probably (from the strange form in which he expresses his sense of the ardent affection which would have led the Galatians, "if it had been possible, to have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him"—Gal. iv. 15) by a sharp attack of that affection of the eyes, at once painful and disfiguring (Gal. iv. 14), which very many of the profounder students of St. Paul's life have identified with the mysterious "thorn in the flesh," which has passed into a proverb. (2 Cor. xii. 7.) Is it too much to suppose that the physician may well have thought that one who had recently suffered so much needed his loving and skilful care as he entered on the labours of his European ministry?

That conclusion is at all events strengthened by the fact that when they meet again, and when, so far as we trace their companionship, it was renewed never again to be broken, it was under circumstances altogether analogous. Some years had passed, during which we trace at the outset the loving care of the friend in the help sent once and again to St. Paul at Thessalonica from Philippi (Phil. iv. 15), and again at Corinth (2 Cor. xi. 9), and then they were divided. In one instance, indeed, I would venture to suggest that St. Luke's influence may have helped the Apostle in his work at Ephesus. He taught there, we are told, daily "in the school," or lecture-room, "of one Tyrannus" (Acts xix. 9). That was not a

common name among either Greeks or Romans. It is found, however, in the well-known list of freedmen and others attached to the Imperial service, in the *Columbarium*, or burial-place, of the Empress Livia, the wife of Augustus, and there it appears as the name of a physician. (Gori. *Columb. Liv.* p. 120.) It was the commonest matter of course that such names and callings should descend from father to son, and it is, therefore, in a high degree probable that the teacher who thus placed his lecture-room at the disposal of the herald of a new and unpopular doctrine, may have done so because he and that teacher had a common friend in the physician of Philippi.

It is clear from the whole tenor of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians that, immediately before his next visit to Philippi, where it is equally clear that Luke remained, St. Paul had again suffered severely from his bodily infirmities. He "despaired of life," had been "delivered as from so great a death," was as one "always bearing in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus," groaning under the burden of his "earthly tabernacle," his "outward man perishing day by day" (2 Cor. i. 10; iv. 10, 15; v. 2). Can we interpret these expressions otherwise than as indicating that he had sunk into a state of feebleness and prostration, in which the help of his friend and adviser would once again be an urgent necessity for him? Must we not in part, at least, look on this as the reason that led St. Luke from that time forth to accompany him in all his journeyings? Other motives may, of course, have combined with this. If, as I believe, he was

“the brother whose praise was in the gospel” of 2 Cor. viii. 18, he was chosen by the Churches of Macedonia, in which he had been so active, to be their representative among the bearers of the great collection for the “saints” at Jerusalem. He may have welcomed the opportunity for going over the sacred ground of Galilee and Judea, and adding to the materials for that history to which, as St. Paul’s words imply, he had already devoted himself. These motives would account for his journey to Jerusalem ; but we want something more to explain his abandonment of his former work, in order that he might be with St. Paul during his two years’ imprisonment at Cesarea and on his voyage to Italy: and that something I find in strong personal affection and the growing sense of his necessity to the Apostle’s well-being.

It will be, I am sure, within the experience of most of us that we cannot be thrown for any length of time, hardly perhaps even for a single consultation, into the society of a thoughtful and cultivated physician without learning something from him beyond our own immediate case, from the knowledge with which his studies have enriched him. His words dwell with us, and we reproduce them and apply them, with more or less freedom, as half parables of moral, or political, or social life. We talk of the *diagnosis* of national diseases, of the policy of *counter-irritation*, of the *delirium tremens* of political or ecclesiastical fanaticism, of the *hypertrophy* of this or that organ of the body politic. Such instances of phrases that were once professional and have become literary might be multiplied by

the score. It will hardly, I think, be questioned that a companionship such as that which we have traced between the physician and the Apostle would be likely to issue in like phenomena.

The influence of that companionship is what I now seek to trace, and I begin with that in which it is most conspicuous, the group of letters known as the Pastoral Epistles. Here, as the most prominent instance, I take (1) the remarkable use of the verb *ὑγιαίνειν* (to be healthy), in its figurative application to doctrine. The frequency of that application (1 Tim. i. 9; vi. 3; 2 Tim. i. 13; Titus i. 9) is concealed in the English Version by the needless variations of rendering, such as "*sound* doctrine," "*wholesome* words," "*sound* words," and the like; but the verb is in all such cases (eight in number) one and the same. That word, as might be expected, was one in frequent use by Hippocrates, *e.g.*, *Aph.* ii. 15; *Vet. Med.* c. 10. It was likely to be found in the vocabulary of every Greek physician. It is noticeable that it is found three times in St. Luke's Gospel (Chaps. v. 31; vii. 10; xv. 2) and not in the other three. It does not occur in St. Paul's earlier writings. I say, then, to begin with, that this reference of all teaching to an ideal standard of healthiness is one which we may naturally connect with the influence exercised on St. Paul's thoughts and language by those of the "beloved physician." He had learnt to recognize there also, in the region of the spiritual life as in the natural, the importance of health, of the "*mens sana in corpore sano*." And as the natural sequence of this, departures from the true faith present themselves to his mind as deflections in one direction or

another from that normal healthiness. Here, again, we must look to the Greek rather than the English. One who teaches another doctrine than that of the words of the Lord Jesus, in which he recognizes the highest type of health (1 Tim. vi. 3), is not "doting," as in the Authorized Version, but "*diseased*" (1 Tim. vi. 4) about disputes and logomachies. Of the most malignant form of that disease he predicts that it will spread and have its course, feeding on the organs of life, not (as in the Authorized Version) as a "canker," but as a gangrene, γάγγραινα (Galen's *Commentary on Aph.* vii. 50), as a *cancer*, in the full significance which that term has in modern pathology (2 Tim. ii. 17), eating into the inner life of the soul, and spreading its corruption. So, again, in that word τυφώεις, τετυφωμένοι, and the cognate forms, which are rendered, "lifted up with pride," "proud," "high-minded" (1 Tim. iii. 6; vi. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 4), we trace, when we turn to the language of Hippocrates and Galen, not simply a moral defect, but a specific form of fever, as far as the word goes, identical with our familiar *typhus* (*Int. Aff.* c. xlii.) having as its characteristic symptoms the "*delirantium somnia*," to which St. Paul compares the insane, self-centred imaginations of the false teachers. Others, however, are in a yet more hopeless state. They have their very conscience seared as with a red-hot iron (1 Tim. iv. 2), *cauterized*, to use St. Paul's more technical term, by crimes which have left an ineffaceable brand upon their souls, and yet in doing so have numbed its sensitiveness, so that, as has been said of some, the very "nerve of pudicity" is dead in them. Of a lighter form of the same evil he

notes that they have "itching ears" (κνηθόμενοι τὴν ἀκοήν; the word is strictly technical, Hippoc. p. 444-35), are affected as by a "*pruritus aurium*," which they cannot control or cure. (2 Tim. iv. 3.)

The influence of which I speak shews itself not less plainly, if I mistake not, in the singular moderation with which St. Paul deals with all questions that affect the relation between the health of the body and that of the spirit of man. Timothy, it would seem, conscious of some temptations from the youthful lusts that war against the soul, sought to check them by an overstrained asceticism. St. Paul saw the dangers incident to these practices as a physician's eye would see them, and twice warns his disciple against them. "Bodily exercise," he tells him (again a word from Hippocrates, *Aph.* vi. 5, γυμνασία), the *training* of the body, as the athlete or the ascetic trains it, as Timothy was training it, profits a little, but godliness, piety in the true sense of the word, is profitable for all things, in this life and in the life to come. (1 Tim. iv. 8.) The well-known advice, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake" (στόμαχος, again from Hippocrates, *Isag. puls.* p. 72,) "and for thine often infirmities" (1 Tim. v. 23), supplies obviously another example. The position of that advice is, however, peculiar, and calls for a special notice. It comes in, it will be remembered, with a strange abruptness, in the midst of a series of rules for trying ecclesiastical offences: "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. . . . Observe these things without preferring one before

another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins. Keep thyself pure." Then follows the counsel about a "little wine." Then the letter returns to the previous subject, and discusses the difference between open and secret sins. What account are we to give of this strange parenthesis? By what train of unexpressed thought was St. Paul led to interpose this precept here? I venture to think that the train of thought was precisely such as would be natural in one habitually under the guidance of the counsels of a wise physician. It lay in the nature of things, looking to the social condition of the Empire, that the most numerous offences that would come under the notice of an ecclesiastical judge would be sins against sexual purity. The mere inquiry into such things, in all their loathsome details, brought with it, to a young and sensitive nature, like that of St. Paul's true son in the faith, the risk of mental contamination. Timothy, it would seem, sought to guard against that risk by a more rigorous abstinence. St. Paul saw, as one under such guidance would be sure to see, that that rigour was certain to overshoot its mark, that the enfeebled and excited system was more likely to be the victim of unclean imaginations than one in an average state of healthy equilibrium; and, lest his injunction, "Keep thyself pure," should lead to fresh austerities, he throws in a plain practical rule of dietetics tending to that result. So, perhaps, in an ecclesiastical system where the practice of confession led the guide of souls to be often brought in contact with perils of a like kind, a wise physician would say to

him, "If you must listen to such things, at all events don't go into the confessional on an empty stomach."

What we have seen in the two passages just examined will prepare us for the right interpretation of another, which, from its singular difficulty, has been the *crux* of commentators. As it stands in the English Version it is not too much to say that it is simply unintelligible. "Which things" (he is speaking of ascetic rules) "touch not, taste not, handle not" (the first clause referring, by a well-understood euphemism, as in 1 Cor. vii. 1, to an enforced celibate life as essential to holiness),—"which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh" (Col. ii. 23). The true explanation of the last clause is found, I am bold to say, in looking to the strictly medical sense of the word translated "satisfying." Πλησμονή appears in Hippocrates. as satiety, the state that results from high feeding. (*Aph.* ii. 4, 22.) It is contrasted with hunger, it is associated with drunkenness (*De Itner. Affect.* lxxv. 39). Giving it this meaning, and assigning to τιμή its natural sense of "honour" or "repute," we find in the whole passage a line of thought identical with that which we have traced in the Epistle to Timothy. At Colosse, as at Ephesus, St. Paul met with those who, in their Manichean horror of the body, forbade to marry and commanded to abstain from meats. "Their negative rules," he says, "have a counterfeit show of wisdom in self-imposed ritual, and abject lowliness, and unsparing treatment of the body; yet, in relation to fulness of the flesh, to the lusts which

that fulness implies, they are absolutely valueless, *held in no honour* as remedies for that disease."

With less certainty, yet unwilling to pass over what seems to me to throw light upon another obscure passage, I refer to a precept of like character, bearing upon the weaknesses of the other sex. St. Paul is urging the right relation of the woman to the man as one of subordination. He suffers not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man. Adam had been created first, not Eve. Eve had been the first to yield to the tempter. And then, "Nevertheless, she shall be saved in [or rather *through*] child-bearing, if she continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety" (1 Tim. ii. 15). I seem to myself to hear in this the counsel of one who had studied the character and work of women from the stand-point both of a trained physician and of one who had been the guide and director of the guild or sisterhood at Philippi. To him, whatever tended to draw woman from the duties of home-life seemed full of danger. She would find her true salvation, her true deliverance from the temptations incident to her sex, through that child-bearing (note the characteristic use of a technical term, *διὰ τῆς τεκνογονίας*) which was commonly regarded as the penalty of her transgression. Maternity, with all the affections and responsibilities which it involved, was the true discipline for her perfection.

These are the more prominent instances, but the case may be rendered yet more complete by noting other examples of a like phraseology used as by one familiar with it in daily conversation. St. Paul, over and above his direct argument against forcing cir-

cumcision as a condition of entrance into the Christian Church, speaks of it at times with a half-humorous Luther-like scorn and indignation. When the rite is retained after its purpose has been exhausted, and it has thus been emptied of its symbolism and sacramental character, it has no longer any title to its old time-honoured name, but is simply, so to speak, a surgical operation. It is no longer a true circumcision, but an incision, or, to use the strictly medical Greek, not a *περιτομή*, but a *κατατομή* (Phil. iii. 2). In a yet bolder passage, speaking of the same false teachers, he bursts out into the wish (I follow the consensus of all the best commentators in my paraphrase), "I would that they who trouble you would mutilate themselves after the manner of the eunuch-priests of Cybele" (Gal. v. 12). Not *circumcision*, nor *incision*, but *excision* was the natural outcome of this morbid dwelling on the fleshly rite. Is not this precisely the kind of language likely to be used by a Gentile physician resenting, with a natural scorn, the attempt of the Judaizing teachers to impose their yoke of bondage upon him and his brother converts?

So, in not a few passages where our English Version hides the technicality, when we read, "If a man strive for masteries he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully" (2 Tim. ii. 5), the Greek adverb (*νομίμως*) is a strictly technical word, half medical and half athletic, implying the observance of the normal system of diet and exercise which physicians and gymnasts alike prescribed for the training of the wrestler (Hippoc. *Aph. i.* 15). When we find, "they turned aside to vain jangling" (1 Tim. i. 6),

the word (*ἐκτρέπεσθαι*), though common enough, was used by Hippocrates in a special sense of a bodily state or organ turning off or degenerating into something lower than its actual state (*de temp. morbi*). When we read, "I count them but dung" (Phil. ii. 8), the word is not the common familiar one, but technical (*σκύβαλα*), such as a medical writer would use, and which has, I believe, passed into modern medical terminology.

In the word *ἀφορμή*, again, commonly rendered "occasion" in 1 Tim. v. 14, and elsewhere, we have a term used by St. Paul alone (Rom. vii. 8-11; 2 Cor. v. 12, xi. 11; Gal. v. 13) among the New Testament writers, that is found in Hippocrates as expressing the starting-point of the action of disease (*Aph.* vi. 14). In *ἀτενίζειν*, used only by St. Luke and St. Paul in the New Testament (2 Cor. ii. 7-13), and by the former to describe the look and expression of the latter (Luke iv. 20; xxii. 56; Acts iii. 21; x. 4; xiv. 9; xxiii. 1), we have a form technically used by Hippocrates for the fixed gaze of intense emotion, which soon passes into the glare of delirium (*Coac. Prem.* v. 1). Even the exceptional use of Scythian, to denote one great division of the human race (Col. iii. 11), has its counterpart in the medical arrangement of climates in their relation to health under the heads of Libya, Delos, Scythia, as representative instances (Hippoc. p. 166).

Here my induction for the present ends. It will be admitted, I think, that I have sufficiently proved the position which I sought to establish; but I am far from thinking that my inquiry has been complete or full, and the way in which each re-

ference to the Greek medical writers has brought fresh coincidences to light makes me feel that there is in them a mine, as yet unworked, for this purpose, to reward the search of more laborious or more leisurely scholars than myself.¹ What has been brought out has, I venture to think, a claim on our attention, if only as bearing on the personal relations of the two men of whom I have been speaking. It is no small matter to gain a fresh insight into the friendships of a great thinker or a great worker, to watch their birth and growth and the circumstances that drew the men nearer and nearer to each other, to trace the influence of mind on mind, to note how the familiar words and phrases of the one percolate into the language of the other. But the interest, I may add the importance, of the inquiry does not end here. We have been told, with a great parade of learning, by the author of "Supernatural Religion" that there is no evidence of the existence of any of the first

¹ I add a few instances as further illustrations :—1. St. Luke's use of the word *παροξυσμός* (Acts xv. 39), though not exclusively, is yet characteristically medical. (Hippoc. *Αφθ.* ii. 13.) 2. St. Paul's use of *παραγγελία* in the same way as that in which it is employed by Hippocrates in the document known as "The Oath." 3. St. Paul's arguments (1) as to the functions of the several parts of the body (1 Cor. xii. 14-27), and the nature of the sensuous and the spiritual bodies (1 Cor. xv. 36-44). These, though not technical, are yet, it will be admitted, such as would commend themselves to a mind familiar with a technical view of the matters they discuss. 4. The phrase in Ephes. iv. 16, "fitly joined together, and compacted by every joint of supply" (*συναρμολογούμενον καὶ συμβιβάζόμενον διὰ πάσης ἀφῆς τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας*), has, to say the least, the ring of a physiological illustration. 5. "Rightly dividing" (*ὀρθοτομοῦντα*) "the word of truth" (2 Tim. ii. 15), which have been applied to the work of the ploughman, the sculptor, the carpenter, the sacrificing priest, the father of the family, may quite as legitimately be connected with the skill of the surgeon, operating with the precision which true insight gives.

three Gospels prior to the middle of the second century, that the traditions which ascribe them to St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke have no claim to historical credibility. Passing over other grounds on which that assertion may be disputed, I submit that it is indefinitely weakened, if not altogether refuted, by the conclusions to which we have been led. By a series of coincidences so absolutely undesigned and latent, that, so far as I know, they have never before been brought together as materials for an induction, we have seen (1) that St. Paul's casual mention of Luke as the "beloved physician" explains characteristic phenomena in the books commonly ascribed to him, which demand an explanation and do not easily admit of any other; (2) that these characteristics and the technical culture which they imply explain equally peculiar phenomena in the Pastoral and other Epistles of St. Paul. (3) We have shewn, to a degree of probability so high that it is scarcely less than certainty, that the Pastoral Epistles were written by the friend of Luke, that the Gospels and the Acts were written by the friend of Paul, and so we establish, as far as that probability goes, the date both of the Epistles and the Gospels. But then it follows that, leaving the other Gospels to stand or fall on their own evidence, there is at least one of which we can say that it brings before us contemporary, though not perhaps direct, testimony to the facts which it records. We need not go to Papias, or Irenæus, or Justin for scattered intimations of the existence of the Gospels. Here is one which the whole weight of circumstantial

evidence leads us to ascribe to the generation of St. Peter and St. Paul, and its opening words imply the evidence not only of a widely diffused oral knowledge, but of still earlier written records. And that Gospel is the work not of an illiterate publican or fisherman of Galilee (I use the common language, though I believe it to be in no small measure an exaggeration), but of a man of culture and learning, conversant with the works that were in highest repute in the medical schools of Greece. He comes across the facts, inquires into them minutely, tracks the reports to their sources, accepts, believes. Men may, if they will, look on him as credulous and superstitious, as some among us look on any physician or man of science who avows himself a Christian as credulous and superstitious now, and so reject his testimony ; but they cannot do so on the ground that he lived long after the events, or took no pains to inquire into them, or had not received the training which qualified him to judge. The one ground on which they can consistently set aside his evidence is that they postulate the impossibility of miracles. In other words, they take the short and easy method of begging the question.

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

A PARABLE OF THE FIG-TREES.

“BRING forth fruits meet for repentance.” But what fruits *are* meet for repentance? To that question let me reply with a parable.

You remember that as our Lord went from Bethany to Jerusalem He saw a fig-tree by the wayside, full of leaves, and came to it that He might eat of its fruit. But when He reached it He found nothing but leaves on it, and condemned it to perpetual barrenness. The conscious tree withered beneath his rebuke; and when they passed it the very next morning the wondering disciples saw that it was “dried up from the roots.” This story is familiar to you all: but perhaps you did not know that three other fig-trees were growing hard by, near enough to hear what passed between Christ and the fruitless tree, and to mark how it withered beneath his curse. Yet there were such trees, or we shall assume that there were. And being observant and reflective trees they were very much alarmed to see that “the axe was laid to the roots of the trees,” and that “every tree which brought not

¹ Many years ago I heard a singularly beautiful and heart-searching sermon from the late Rev. T. T. Lynch, based, I think, on the words, “Bring forth fruits meet for repentance” (St. Matt. iii. 8). I was so deeply impressed by the opening passage of the discourse that I took some hasty notes of it at the time, and afterwards wrote them out as nearly in Mr. Lynch’s language as I could. I cannot be sure that I recalled his very words, and therefore I do not venture to attach his name to this brief paper, lest I should do wrong to one whose very memory is dearer to me than the presence of most living men: but I am sure the substance of it is his; and I believe that all who are familiar with his style will feel that I have presented at least a few of his happy turns of thought and expression.—E D.

forth good fruit would be hewn down and cast into the fire." They said among themselves: "We indeed have some fruits; but, oh, how few! We will do better next year, lest we should likewise perish." The seasons passed; the winds blew, the rains fell, the sun shone: and now, at last, "the time of figs" has come round again. We take the road to Bethany, to see how these three trees have kept their purpose of amendment.

We approach the first tree; and, looking at it attentively, we are surprised and grieved to find that, though it is thick with broad tender leaves, it has but little fruit, and that its fruit is as poor as it is scanty. We say: "How is this, that thy fruit is so scanty and poor when thy purpose of amendment was so alarmed and earnest?" And the tree replies: "I waited day after day, month after month, to see what would come; and no prophet passed this way; no look, no word, of reproach was cast on me: and Nature is lenient, and has room for leaves as well as for fruit. Why should I trouble myself to do too much? I have done more than last year. I have some fruit to shew, and many leaves. Why should I not be content? No prophet will ever pass this way again; or, if a prophet should come, I have done enough to save myself from his curse." *This* tree has *not* brought forth fruits meet for repentance; for it has done nothing from love, and very little from fear.

We advance to the second tree; and on this also we find only a few figs; but they are very large and good. We do not for a moment mistake it for a cumberer of the ground; its few but large fruits

shew plainly through the leaves. Yet the tree wears an aspect of sadness, and waits with some apprehension to hear what we have to say to it. Noting its aspect of settled grief, we do not ask : "Why are your fruits so few when your purpose was so earnest?" We say : "Be not sad and discouraged, O tree, because you have borne but little fruit ; rather be glad that your fruit is so fine and sweet. Heretofore you brought forth nothing but leaves ; now you have good, if not much, fruit. You will do more and better next year, if you hold fast to your purpose of amendment, and soon your fruit will be as abundant as it is good." This tree *has* brought forth fruits meet for repentance ; for it has done well, and is sorry that it has not done better.

We pass on to the third tree ; and on this we find much fruit indeed, but its fruit is exceedingly various in quality : some of the figs are large and sweet, but some are so small and crude that there is little chance of their being brought to perfection. We accost it, and, as our looks blend surprise with congratulation, the tree makes haste to prevent us from giving it more than its due, and says : "It grieves me that my fruit, which is so abundant, is yet so poor. I have discovered in myself, since I resolved to amend, both a power that I knew not of, and an impotence which I did not suspect. I did not know I could do so much as I have done ; but I did think that what I could do, *that* I should do well. Power is mine ; alas, that I should so have wasted it ! but, alas, weakness is also mine ; and though I can do much, I do it but to little purpose !" This third tree, like the second, has brought forth fruits meet

for repentance ; for it has done much, and would fain have done better : and therefore we bid it be of good heart, and leave it with good hope that, as it has already borne much fruit, so in due time all its fruit will become perfect.

But here some humble soul may cry out, "Alas, sir, I am no fruit-tree ! I am but as a thorn or a brier. Have you no word of comfort, or promise, for me ?" Surely I have. Even a thorn may yield flowers which gladden men with their beauty and their fragrance ; even the bramble yields berries which the birds and the children find very sweet. There is your comfort ; and here is your promise : "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree." In the kingdom and garden of Christ strange transformations take place : the old man is changed into the new man ; clean men are brought out of unclean ; fruitful and serviceable men out of men who by nature are wild and barren ; firs out of thorns, myrtles—nay, even vines and fig-trees—out of briers. However wild and barren your nature may be, if you crave comfort and promise, that is, if you honestly desire to amend, to become better—there is a power in Christ capable of making you better. You are repenting of the past ; and He will shew you how, in the future, even you may "bring forth fruits meet for repentance."

THE BOOK OF JOB.

I.—THE PROLOGUE. (*Concluded.*)

THE Second Trial of Job was probably divided from the First by a considerable interval. The Targum places a full year between them ; other authorities place a month : neither the one assumption nor the other, however, has any more solid foundation than the conjecture that the Poet conceived of the heavenly Cabinet as meeting at stated and regular intervals. But though we cannot pretend to determine dates, it is surely reasonable to infer from what we know of the moral history and experience of man that the first temptation would be allowed time to *work*, to develop its force and bitterness, to accumulate its full weight ; and that the heart of Job, rocking to and fro under so amazing a stress of misfortune, would be long before it regained its poise and so far adjusted itself to its new condition as to be able to say,—

“Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken ;
Blessed be the Name of Jehovah.”

Whatever the interval, we may be sure that the second temptation came soon enough ; for, in some respects, it was far more searching and penetrating than the first. Mere physical health does more to sustain the spirit than we suspect until our health

is seriously impaired. The calamities which had already befallen Job were only too likely to expose him to the suspicion and scorn of the tribes, as a man smitten by God for his sins; but it was barely possible that they might see unparalleled misfortune in them rather than unparalleled guilt. When, however, the very person of Job was invaded by a rare and monstrous form of disease, which made him loathsome to all who saw him as well as to himself, his monstrous guilt would be assumed as past all doubt. And, in any case, the loss of health was an *additional* trial; it came on the back of all other losses, all other causes for wonder, and sorrow, and resentment. If, in this second trial, God's eulogy of the afflicted Patriarch is warmer and his pity for him more profound, on the other hand, the malignity of Satan is sharpened against him by a sense of failure, and he strikes, the very moment he gets permission, with his utmost force.

This Trial is recorded in Chapter ii., verses 1-10.

Verses 1-3 are, for the most part, a repetition of Chapter i. verses 6-8, and call for little remark. But it should be observed that verse 3 ends with a new phrase, in which Jehovah complains, with a touch of indignant reproach, of the malice of Satan in instigating Him to afflict Job "without cause," and speaks of his faithful servant with even more than his former love and pride. Satan had affirmed that the integrity of Job was bound up with his gains, and that when the gains were taken away he would fling his integrity after them. And, now, Jehovah calls on the Adversary to mark, and to confess, that, although all that

he had been taken away from this perfect man, "he still holds fast his integrity," his whole-hearted devotion to God, and will not let it go.

Here already, then, the professed zeal of Satan for the honour of God is detected and exposed. He had affected to believe that Job was imposing on the generous credulity of Jehovah, and to be indignant that the imposture should succeed. But now, in that "thou did'st move me against him *without cause*"—a phrase in which a rueful pity for the sufferings of his servant and pride in his constancy are strangely blended—the real hypocrite is unmasked. It was not the honour of the King of Heaven for which Satan was eager, but the destruction and disgrace of the perfect man whose disinterested fidelity was a standing rebuke to his own infidelity and selfishness. The charge alleged against Job had been proved to be untrue, and therefore it recoiled on the head of him who had advanced it.

Verse 4.—This challenge to confess his malice only exasperated the malice of Satan. He had been content before to charge Job with impiety; now he charges him also with utter inhumanity. He implies that Job really cared for no one but himself, not even for his sons and daughters; and that so long as he walked in a whole skin the genuine nature of the man would never be revealed. The proverb in which this atrocious insinuation is conveyed—as if the very devil himself were a little ashamed of it, and did not choose to be considered the author of it—has long been discussed by scholars; but as yet they are able to agree only in its general import: and *that*, by the way, is determined for them by the context.

"A skin for a skin" (or, as it might be even more literally rendered, "*Skin for skin*, and all that a man hath, he will give for his life") bears some resemblance, however, to other proverbs which may help us to explain it. Thus, for example, the Jews have a saying, "*One gives one's skin to save one's skin*" --i.e. gives a part to save the rest, "*but all to save one's life*," which very closely resembles that here quoted. Possibly, "A skin for a skin," in the sense of "A hide for a hide," was an Arab proverb in the time of Job, familiar to the lips of their traders, and was used by the *literati* to point the selfishness of men who only give when they expect to receive a full equivalent. Perhaps, "*Give a hide to catch a hide*" would convey its sense to an English ear; or the rural proverb, "Give an apple to him that has an orchard;" or, even the vulgar saying, "Give a sprat to catch a herring." Satan, who, in his self-absorption, can recognize nothing unselfish in the whole round of human motives, meant that Job's piety was purely selfish, a mere barter of one good thing against another and a better; nay, that his very humanity extended only to himself; that he cared little for the loss of his children; that so long as life was left him, if he believed he owed it to God, he would affect to serve Him. "Take away *that*, so that he shall account his very life to be gone from him, and his assumed piety will open and disclose his real and utter selfishness." It is edifying to hear this *pious* devil declaiming on the impiety of man, this *human* devil, who only longed to do Job harm, declaiming on the inhumanity of man; or, in one word, this *disinterested* devil declaiming on the selfishness of man!

Verses 5, 6.—For the greater good and glory of his servant Job, Jehovah permits even this issue to be raised and tried. Satan is authorized so to “touch” Job that he shall account death better than such a life as his (Chap. vii. 15), in order that the trial may be complete ; but he is not allowed to take life itself, in order that, if Job should stand the trial, his faith and patience may receive a due reward.

Verse 7.—The foul disease with which Job was smitten, and of which he himself details many of the symptoms, was clearly *elephantiasis*, the severest and most terrible form of leprosy. Beginning with “grievous ulcers,” it eats, like a cancer, through the whole body, swelling the limbs, especially at the joints, into monstrous lumps, till they resemble the limbs of an elephant (whence its name), and even causing them to rot off piecemeal.

Verse 8.—These ulcers were too loathsome and fetid to be touched. Hence the use of the “potsherd,” or piece of broken earthenware, to remove the feculent discharge. Rosenmüller says (*in loco*) that Orientals sometimes used an instrument for this purpose shaped like the hand, and made of ivory.

For “ashes” the Septuagint reads “dung.” The two words mean the same thing. It is as correct as it is usual to speak of Job’s “dunghill,” although that unsavoury word is not once employed either in the Original or in our Authorized Version ; for, from many of the allusions of this Story, it is quite certain that we are to conceive of the Patriarch as lying on what “the Sons of the East” call the *mezbele*: this indeed, is the very scene of the Poem. It is necessary, therefore, that we should learn what the Arabian *mezbele* is like.

Consul Wetzstein (in his valuable contributions to Delitzsch's Commentary on Job) gives an accurate and graphic description of it, from which I select the following sentences: "The dung, which is heaped up there, is not mixed with straw, because in warm dry countries no litter is required for the cattle. It is brought dry, in baskets, to the place before the village, and is generally burned once every month. . . . The ashes remain. . . . If a village has been inhabited for a century, the *mezbele* reaches a height which far surpasses it. The winter rains turn the ash-heap into a compact mass, and gradually change the *mezbele* into a firm mound of earth. . . . It serves the inhabitants of the district as a watch-tower and, on close oppressive evenings, as a place of assembly, because there is a current of air on the height. There the children play about the whole day long; *there the forsaken one lies, who, having been seized by some terrible malady, is not allowed to enter the dwellings of men; by day asking alms of the passers-by, and at night hiding himself among the ashes which the sun has warmed. . . .* Many a village of the Hauran has lost its original name, and is called *el-mezâbil*, from the size and number of these mounds, which always indicate a primitive and extensive cultivation. . . . And many a more modern village is built upon an ancient *mezbele*, because there there is a stronger current of air, which renders the position more healthy." It is on such a mound, or *mezbele*, as this that we are to think of Job as lying when, smitten by "a terrible malady," he was no longer "allowed to enter the dwellings of men."

Verse 9.—Job's wife—the Targum says her name was Dinah, and puts a long and violent harangue into her mouth ; feeling it, no doubt, says an unfeeling commentator, an outrage on nature and propriety that, under the circumstances, “a woman should say so little”—has had hard measure meted out to her. Human characters, indeed, are so wonderfully complex that it is never easy in dealing with them to “judge righteous judgment.” And to infer an entire character from a single sentence uttered in a moment of intense excitement, is assuredly very hazardous, and is likely to be very unjust. Yet *this* is the measure which has been meted out to Job's wife, not only in the popular, but also, as a rule, in the scholarly, estimate of her character. For one passionate utterance, because she once spake “as the foolish women,” *i.e.* the impious or irreligious women, speak, she has become a by-word and a reproach, and figures as a kind of Scriptural Xantippe in the general imagination. That is very unjust. We, who so sorely need charitable construction ourselves, might surely construe her one foolish speech more charitably. There are few, men or women, who could endure to be measured against “the perfect man ;” and therefore it is hardly a discredit to his wife if she fell short of him. Who would not ? Then, too, she had endured all that he had endured. *She* had been brought to penury and dishonour with him. “The young people” who were killed in the house of the firstborn were *her* children as well as his. And, like him, she had borne the calamities of the first trial without a murmur. Very possibly this second trial was even heavier to her than to

him ; for to the sensitive womanly nature it is often harder to see another suffer than to endure suffering, and, on the spur of loving impulse, it often says far more and other than it means. If Job's wife were a woman of the finer sort,—and the wife of such a man, the mother of such children, is likely to have been “a woman nobly planned,”—it must have been far harder for her to see him sitting, stunned and hopeless, on the ash-heap, than to have sat there herself. She might have endured his sufferings, though she could not endure to see him suffer them. And so, in an impulsive, passionate, womanly way, she cries, “Renounce God, and die !”

“A very shocking speech !” Perhaps ; but let us remember of what a shock it was the echo, and not scan too severely the words of one half-maddened by an intolerable misery. *God* did not judge her harshly for them ; for she too was raised from the dust to share the sevenfold splendour and prosperity of Job, and to bear him sons and daughters.

None the less, however, must her passionate grief and despair have embittered Job's sufferings. The more he loved her, and the more worthy she was of his love, the more keen must have been his anguish at seeing her distraught with resentment, the more perilous must have been the temptation to take her desperate council, and to rush out of a world where all things seemed disordered and out of course. So that it makes *for* Job's constancy and patience, not against them, to adopt the nobler rather than the baser conception of his wife.

And, indeed, the more closely we study her words, the more we find in them which denotes

intelligence and largeness of soul. Obviously, when she asks, "Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity?" using the very words which Jehovah had used (verse 3), she had penetrated to the very heart of the question at issue, and saw that Job, in maintaining his righteousness was exposing himself to ever new trial and affliction. So, again, when she employed the very word (*bârêk*) which Satan had set himself to wring from her husband's lips, and which Job had uttered, in its good sense, at the close of the first trial, she may have meant "*Curse* God, and die!" or she may have meant, as I am disposed to think she did, "*Bless* this God of yours again, and you will surely die." Her meaning may have been, and probably was: "Do not any longer stand on your righteousness, but confess your sin—confess anything God wants you to confess, say anything He wants you to say, lest you perish. You blessed Him before (Chap. i. 21), and He did but send new disasters upon you; bless Him again, and you will lose all that is left you—life. It is not blessing or praise that He wants of you, but contrition, confession. Give Him whatever He wants, and have done with Him."

This may have been the sense in which "Dinah" spoke; but even if it were not, even if we put the worst possible construction on her words, is she to be condemned for a single passionate outburst? "Think ye to reprove words!" cries Job to Eliphaz (Chap. vi. 26). "But the words of the desperate are for the wind to blow away." Should not the words of his wife, then, driven desperate by misery, be left to the winds? He himself, too, afterwards

spoke many "wild and whirling words;" yet God did not condemn him for them, but affirmed rather that his servant Job had "spoken of him aright" (Chap. xlii. 7), despite the outbursts of passion and reproach forced from him by despair and misery. Shall we not, then, make the same generous allowance for his wife?

Verse 10.—Keen as the trial was, Job held fast his integrity. The issue of the second trial resembles that of the first. As before he had recognized God's right to take away as well as to give, so here he admits it to be man's duty to accept evil from God as well as good. Neither any hope of good nor any fear of evil will induce him to palter with his own conscience and confess sins of which he is unaware, or to acknowledge that God has dealt unjustly with him, however amazed and perplexed he may be at so wide a departure from the usual method of Providence.

His second victory is announced to us in the words, "In all this Job sinned not with his lips." "Not *with his lips*, indeed," insinuates the Targum: "that means he had already begun to sin and murmur *in his heart*." How *can* men be so hard on men? how can they, as Chaucer puts it, "so gladlie demen to the baser end"? There is not the slightest ground for the insinuation of the Targum. What the phrase really means and suggests is, that not so much as a sinful word was wrung from Job even under the pressure of so great a misery; that he kept his very lips pure, and not offending in word, had thereby proved himself to be, according to the standard of St. James (Chap. iii. 2), "a perfect man." His wife had not

been able altogether to rule the unruly member ; but he had. Sin is not in words only, nor mainly ; but in the emotion of which words are but an expression. Had Job sinned *in his heart*, he had sinned indeed.

With the arrival of the three Friends, Job's third and severest trial begins. Up to this point he had maintained a noble humility and resignation under the pressure of doubts which were even more terrible to him than his unparalleled calamities. He himself, indeed, held the very creed held by the Friends, and, had he stood in their place, might have used the very arguments which they used. The problem which absorbed and tormented his mind was the self-same problem which they set themselves to solve, and was based on the same axioms or assumptions, but it was capable of two wholly different solutions. Believing, as they did, that all the miseries of life come from the hand of God and are sent to punish men for their sins, the problem over which Job brooded must have taken a double form, as thus : " God afflicts men only for their sins ; I am afflicted : and therefore I must have sinned." But this conclusion his good conscience entirely refuses to admit ; he is not conscious of sins which clamoured for punishment, and he will not confess sins of which he is unconscious. Inevitably, therefore, he was driven on the other horn of the dilemma : " If I have not sinned, and yet God has afflicted me as though I had sinned heinously and enormously, must not God be unjust ?" From this conclusion, too, he shrinks ; yet no other is open to him, if once his premises be granted : and it never occurred to him to doubt these.

And, therefore, he is content for a time to leave the problem unsolved, to dispense with any logical solution of it, to admit that in the providence of God there are mysteries which he cannot comprehend, and to hold, however illogically, both that he himself is righteous and that God is just.

But the Friends are of a more logical turn, as bystanders are apt to be. They insist on forcing the controversy to a conclusion ; nay, insist on Job's assent to that conclusion ; and as they cannot for a moment suspect the justice of God, to question the integrity of Job is the only alternative left them.

So that Job's third and severest trial consists, not in any new bereavement or loss, but in the interpretation put on his former losses and sorrows by the Friends, and, if by his friends, then by all his world. He had now to taste the bitter anguish of finding himself abandoned and condemned by men as well as forsaken of God, of standing alone, with absolutely nothing to back him save his conscience, against the whole world, against the whole universe. Those who have known what it is to enter into conflict with the very forms of thought and faith which they themselves once held, and which are still so firmly held by the men of their generation as that they are at once cut off from all fellowship and sympathy the moment they call them in question, are in some measure able to enter into the anguish which now pierced Job's spirit to the very quick. It is no wonder that the solitary man, hearing his own misgivings reflected in forms ever more harsh and offensive from the lips of the Friends, should at times grow well-nigh desperate, and meet their

suspensions of his integrity by challenging the justice of God. The only wonder is, that, even in the stress of a conflict so bitter, his heart clave to the God who had grown questionable to his intellect, and insisted on trusting One whom it could no longer comprehend.

But in doing justice to Job, let us not do injustice to the Friends. They were good men. That Job accounted them his friends says much for them. And, indeed, as they disclose themselves to us in their speeches, they say much for themselves. Pious they were, and devout, and even wise in the wisdom of their time. Their grave fault was—and it is a common fault with religious men, and especially with *eminently* religious men—that they were not looking for more light; that they thought the whole truth was included in the simple and portable creed which they had adopted: that they put dogma above fact.

Many commentators are enchanted with the delicate strokes and touches by which the Poet has characterized the three Friends, distinguishing one from the other. I must honestly and sorrowfully confess that I have failed to detect these subtle and delicate strokes, though I have looked for them carefully and often. All I can see of difference in the three men amounts only to this: Eliphaz—probably the eldest and wisest of the Three, with a considerable likeness to Job himself in the general cast of his character and his tone of thought—is of the prophetic order of men; his conclusions and arguments seem to have been framed very largely on oracles and revelations, although, like Bildad, he is also an erudite man and can readily cite the wisdom of the ancients: he has been brought into a closer

and more immediate intercourse with Heaven than his fellows, and, like Balaam, another son of the ancient East, he is a seer of visions and a dreamer of dreams. Bildad goes more on tradition, on the gathered and priceless wisdom of the ancients. A much lesser man every way than Eliphaz, with a much more contracted range of thought and sympathy, he deals in proverbs, in citations from the fathers, and takes a severer and more personal tone in addressing Job. But if Eliphaz is the prophet and Bildad the sage of the trio, what shall we say of Zophar? So far as I can read his character in his words, Zophar is the common good man of his day, the vulgar but sincere formalist; the man who thinks what he says will become true if only he says it often enough and forcibly enough; the man who implicitly believes what he has been taught and demands that every one else should not only believe it too, but also that they should accept it in the very forms in which it has commended itself to him, and, above all, that they should refuse to believe anything *more*. He is sharp, and bitter, and hasty in tone, moreover; he puts a coarse tearing edge on the insinuations of his companions; and prided himself, I dare say, on being a plain blunt man, who said what he meant and meant what he said. A dangerous man to differ from, or to outstrip; the kind of man with whom it is of no use to go a mile if you go but a single inch beyond him; the kind of man, too, who is very apt, as Lowell says of Carlyle, "to call down fire from heaven whenever he cannot conveniently lay his hand on the match-box."

These are the three figures which, for me at least,

loom dimly out of the past as I study this Poem ; and if their outlines are not very distinct or wrought out with much subtlety of thought, we can nevertheless see how admirably they would serve the Poet's turn. He was bent, not only on solving the main problem of the Book, but also on depicting the whole world of thought and emotion quickened in the hearts of men as they contemplated the inequalities and apparent iniquities of human life ; just as Tennyson, in " *In Memoriam*," sets himself, not simply to bewail a personal loss, but to express the whole round of thought and emotion to which such a loss as his gives birth. And, therefore, it was necessary that he should bring Job into relation with typical men, men who would say what, on the whole, the entire ancient world would have said. Only thus could he secure that full and comprehensive treatment of his subject which he desired. Accordingly, he selects a prophet, who could bring to the discussion the highest disclosures Heaven had yet made to earth ; a sage, who could pour the light of ancient wisdom on it ; and the ordinary good man, orthodox but creed-bound, formal but sincere, pious but uncharitable, who could contribute to the discussion whatever was to be found in the accepted formulas of the age.

How long an interval elapsed, after the second trial of Job, before the Friends came to comfort him, it is impossible to determine : some conjecture a year ; others, only a few weeks : but we may fairly assume, I think, that, as at the close of the first trial, a considerable period passed, in which Job would be permitted to enter into its full bitterness and adjust himself to his new conditions, before other and pro-

founder miseries were imposed upon him. Indeed his tone throughout the Poem implies that many months had intervened, months in which his kinsfolk drew back and stood aloof from him, his most inward friends learned to abhor him, and even the "baseborn and base" aborigines of the land, whose sires he had "disdained to rank with the dogs of his flock," had grown bold enough to make him their byword and reproach (Chap. vii. 3; xix. 8-22; xxx. 1-15). The fact, too, that his disease had made such havoc with his frame that the three Friends could no longer recognize him when they saw him, points to the same conclusion.

Verse 11.—Esau had a son named Eliphaz; and this Eliphaz had a son named Teman. (Gen. xxxvi. 4, 10, 11.) Possibly the Eliphaz of our Poem was a descendant of Eliphaz the son of Esau; almost certainly the district of Teman took its name from Esau's grandson. This district lay on the north-east of Edom, within easy reach of the Hauran. Its inhabitants were long famed for wisdom throughout the East, and especially for the wisdom which clothes itself in proverbs, parables, and dark oracular sayings. Thus Jeremiah (Chap. xlix. 7) asks concerning Edom: "Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom poured out?" *i.e.* to the last drop.

Bildad the Shuchite was possibly a descendant of Shuach, the son of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. xxv. 2), who appears to have given his name to a district lying to the east of the Hauran, which is now known as Shakka.

Zophar the Naamathite it is impossible to define or locate. Many places have been called Naamah in Syria and Palestine; but in all probability the home of Zophar was on the other side of the river, *east* of Jordan, and in the vicinity of the Hauran. The Septuagint brings him from Maon (now Maan), a district to the east of Petra, and so makes him close neighbour to Eliphaz. Probably they were all three of them nomadic princes, the sheikhs of wandering clans, with whom Job had become acquainted in his travels, or in his large and varied intercourse with the world.

These three men, when they had heard of all the evil which had befallen him, concerted together to come and condole with him and comfort him,—to pay him, as it were, a state visit; ceremonious visits of condolence being then, as now, a point of good manners in the East.

Verses 12 and 13.—Probably they sought him first at his home, and were there directed to the *mezbele* on which he lay; for, we are told, “they lifted up their eyes *from afar*”—the scene is evidently out of doors—“and knew him not,” his person being disfigured and blackened beyond recognition by the ravages of his disease. Amazed by the spectacle of his degradation and misery, now first realizing perhaps how low he had fallen, they gave mute but speaking expression to their grief and compassion. They rent their mantles; they “sprinkled dust upon their heads to heaven,” *i.e.* caught up dust in their hands, as the Arabs still do, and threw it up into the air so that it fell back on their heads. (Comp. Homer, *Iliad*, xviii. 22.) They

"sat down with him on the ground"—sitting on the bare earth being a customary sign of mourning (2 Sam. xii. 16; Jer. iii. 26; Lam. ii. 10); and not unfrequently, in cases of extreme sorrow, the mourning was protracted through "seven days and seven nights:" thus Joseph made "a great and very sore lamentation," "a mourning for his father seven days" (Gen. lx. 10), and the men of Israel for Saul and Jonathan (1 Sam. xxxi. 13). It was also a sign of their intense and mournful sympathy that during these days "none of them spake a word to him, for they saw that his grief was very great." In like manner Ezekiel, when he first came on his captive brethren by the banks of the Chebar, "sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days" (Ezek. iii. 15). "Among the Jews it is a point of decorum, and one dictated by a fine and true feeling, not to speak to a person in deep affliction until he gives an intimation of a desire to be comforted." There was more here than the observance of Oriental etiquette, however. Probably the Friends, like Ezekiel, were "astonished"—stunned, overwhelmed—with wonder and pity, so that they could not speak. Probably they felt, as we feel, the sanctity of great grief, the impossibility of assuaging it with mere words, the fear of being intrusive, irreverent even, should they open their lips. Probably, too, as they sat silent by his side, they had already begun to ask themselves of what secret sin Job had been guilty that he should have been so sorely smitten by God; perhaps even to ask each other—~~with~~ their eyes what was the hidden flaw in the life of the one whom they had accounted perfect.

But whatever their misgivings and suspicions may have been, Job was evidently unconscious of them; he saw nothing but friendly sympathy and compassion in their silence: he assumes that they are wholly with him, that they are on his side and will take his part. And it is one of the finest and most natural touches in the Poem that the man who had remained silent under the most terrible pressure of misfortune, holding down his unruly thoughts, letting his doubts and questions prey on his heart but refusing to utter them, resolving, like poor Lear,

“No, I will be the pattern of all patience;
I will say nothing,”

is surprised into utterance by the first show of sympathy and kindness. *Now* his pent up grief and rage and despair break all bounds; for he is confident that his friends understand him, and feel for him, and will lend him a credent and sympathetic ear. Deceived at this point, as he soon discovered that he was, he was “the more deceived;” he felt that the very citadel and sanctuary of his soul had been surprised and betrayed. S. COX.

OUR LORD'S WORDS TO HIS MOTHER AT CANA.

(ST. JOHN ii. 4.)

It used to be quite an established thing, almost part of the “tradition of the faith,” to read in these words a rebuke to the Virgin Mother. And this not by any means exclusively or chiefly among Protestant writers, but very generally among the Fathers. Irenæus, Chrysostom, Augustine, all take the same

view of our Lord's meaning ; and the general consent of the ancient expositors may be summed up in the words of the first : " Dominus *repellens intempestivam ejus festinationem* dixit, quio mihi et tibi, mulier."

It may still seem to some an invidious thing, perhaps a rash, to pretend to run counter to such a consensus of authority, ancient and modern ; yet a sense of truth impels me to make the attempt. And if it can be shewn that the circumstances required and the words involved no such rebuke, while they are at least patient of a meaning far more in keeping with the character and position of Christ, I trust that no prepossession or theological prejudice will bind us down to the traditional view.

Let us take the circumstances first : and herein I make bold to ask any candid reader to tell me what fault he can possibly find with the behaviour of our Lord's mother ? Was she never to speak to her Son at all ? Was she never to tell Him about anything ? Was she alone excepted from the general liberty given to men to bring their troubles, their difficulties, their annoyances even, unto Him ? Or, was it wrong of her that she felt for the embarrassment of her hosts—worthy people, too, as they must have been ? Who does not see what an unhappy plight they were in ? Who, that has invited guests and found the provision running short, but can sympathize with their distress ? It is very likely that the fact of Jesus and his little band being there may have brought some unexpected addition to the numbers at the feast ; some may have come, rather on his account than on the bridegroom's, whom a kindly hospitality could not turn away. If

so, it may account for the wine running short (where no intemperance can be suspected), and explain the personal interest taken in the matter by our Lord's mother. Whether, however, this was so, or not,—and it must remain a mere conjecture,—it cannot seriously be argued that she had no business to tell her Son of the trouble her hosts and his were in. There is no instance in the Gospel of his discouraging such a thing; there is the whole analogy of his life and character against it: when did He ever stand upon his dignity, as though He might not be troubled with even the less pressing wants of his fellow-men?

It is, however, assumed that his mother wished to dictate to Him what He should do. But where is anything of the sort written? where hinted at? What could be simpler than her words, "They have no wine"? What could be more proper, more submiss, more thoughtful than her injunction to the servants, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it"? It did not compromise Him; it did not pledge Him to anything; it only cleared the way for anything He might choose to do. But it is supposed that she *intended* to dictate to Him. This is that "reading between the lines" which critics practise with so much gratification to themselves and so much injustice to others, imputing bad meanings to innocent words, according to the real or supposed views of the writer. What right has any one to imagine that our Lord's mother meant to dictate to Him what He should do when she merely mentioned a want? Why should they mete out to her a measure which they would keenly

resent being applied to themselves? Was it not perfectly natural after all? Joseph was now, as we conclude, dead—perhaps, long dead—and she had been habitually dependent on the care, the forethought, the gentle consideration, the ready sympathy of her Son; how should she not go straight to Him with this little trouble? Surely, when we so “read between the lines,” we forget the thirty years spent together at Nazareth, almost alone, and the perfect confidence in all matters of daily life—in such matters, *e.g.*, as food and wine—which must have grown up between mother and Son. It is quite unnecessary to suppose that she even thought of his working a miracle on this occasion. He had not wrought miracles for her and for the supply of her needs; why should she expect Him to do so now for the sake of others; but no doubt his careful loving forethought had habitually taken off her hands and off her mind every care and anxiety of which He could relieve her; and it was the natural result of this, that, when this little trouble about the wine arose, she should tell Him of it as a matter of course, and expect that *somehow* his wisdom and kindness would find a way out of it. To suggest that this was the secret of her behaviour on this occasion is only to suggest that He had been to her all that a perfect Son would naturally be.¹

¹ I think I may dismiss with scorn the idea, entertained perhaps by some, that our Lord intentionally administered a public snub (to use a vulgar but expressive word) to his mother, in order to furnish Protestant controversialists with a suitable theme. This belongs to the histrionic treatment of the Gospel story, as if our Lord were an actor always speaking from behind a mask, with an eye to future controversies.

We have, however, the fact to account for, that Mary has always been blamed, not only by those who have, so to speak, held a brief against her, and have rejoiced to be able to find her in the wrong; but also by those who have revered her as one exceptionally near and dear to God. I think that the mistake,—for mistake I must consider it—has arisen in this way: we cannot help seeing that our Lord spoke with some warmth of feeling; we fail to catch sight of the real emotion which underlay his words; hence we conclude that He must have been moved by something of resentment or indignation, and have sought for the cause of such a feeling in his mother's words. I believe that, in fact, a very different emotion possessed his mind.

It will be allowed, I suppose, that his words themselves in the Original *need* not have conveyed any rebuke? They seem harsh in the English Version; they would be even rude if used now; but they are much softer in the Greek, and probably were softer still, because more familiar in idiom, in the Aramaic. The expression translated "What have I to do with thee?" was probably a familiar one, because the same idiom was used by Pilate's wife in her private message to her husband; and the expression itself was used by the devil speaking through the demoniac (Mark i. 24). In neither case is any reproach implied; in the latter it was immediately followed by the acknowledgment that He was the Holy One of God. Evidently, I think, it was an exclamation, in common use, of sorrowful or angry deprecation, as the case might be: it indicated a certain aversion, but not necessarily to the person

addressed ; all would depend, as in the case of many common exclamations among ourselves, on the tone and manner in which the words were spoken. Of course, we may assume that our Lord looked very angrily at his mother, and that the aversion intimated in his words was against her supposed interference : to me it seems far more probable, far more in keeping with his character, to suppose that He looked very sad, and that the aversion He really felt was to the prospect which opened before his eyes at those innocent words about the wine.

Certainly, had she guessed what the effect of her words would be, she would never have uttered them, or have uttered them only with the deepest sorrow. For what were they ? They were the divinely appointed signal, which our Lord doubtless recognized in Himself, for the commencement of that short career of miraculous beneficence which found its certain and natural goal in the death of the Cross. Given the circumstances of the times, given the temper of the rulers, and even human foresight could have predicted that end from that beginning. If a man *will* use gifts so exceptional and so invidious as those of Christ, he must either use them to crush and disarm others, or he will be crushed himself. And Christ was far too good to use miraculous powers with impunity : the very use, however purely unselfish, implied the claim to possess them ; and the claim to possess them, in one so out of harmony with the dominant religious passions of the day, necessitated his destruction. A mere teacher could be tolerated, or at least endured ; but a teacher who wrought evident miracles was too

dangerous to be tolerated; and when the dominant party were once convinced that either they or He must go to the wall, his destruction was merely a matter of time. Accordingly it was the raising of Lazarus, a miracle of pure beneficence, which precipitated the designs of the rulers and brought about the final catastrophe.

If we recognize this close connection—and I do not see how any one can fail to recognize it—between the miracles of Christ and his death, we may surely understand something of the feeling with which He made that “beginning of miracles” in Cana of Galilee. He must have known secretly where that path would end on which He was about at that moment to enter; He must have known that in the Providence of his Father those innocent words of his mother called Him to take up his Cross and carry it forth to Calvary. Shall we be astonished if the natural shrinking of human nature from death—and such a death!—brake forth in those words of sad expostulation, “What to me and thee, O woman! mine hour is not yet come.” “Mine hour” is here the same evidently of which He afterwards said, “This is *your* hour, and the power of darkness.” For that hour which was the chosen hour of the rulers, the hour of their success and seeming victory, was his hour too, the hour of seeming destruction and of bitter agony, whereby He redeemed the world to God. When, therefore, He said, “Mine hour is not yet come,” we may reverently suppose that such thoughts as these were in his mind: “How little knowest thou what thou art doing, to what thy words are meant to lead me!

There is an hour in store for me of which thou hast heard somewhat already, an hour which will be one of anguish for thee too, when a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also: but that hour is yet afar off; months and years shall pass before that awful hour arises on thee and me; then why, O my mother, why shouldst thou call it to thee? why shouldst thou point me to it? why shouldst thou bid me enter upon the path which has no earthly ending save in the utter darkness of that hour? If I must drink of that cup which the Father hath prepared for me, his will be done; but why should it be thy voice, O my mother, which calls me to it?" Such, seems to me, expressed in very feeble words, the only real and only adequate feeling which could have prompted that exclamation of his. And no one, I think, will dare to say that the feeling was unworthy of Him; He had not been true man if He had not dreaded the strife from which He was to emerge a glorious victor.

And there is another thing to be considered. No one can have contemplated the life of Christ without being struck by the extreme contrast between the former and the latter part of it; the one all quiet and seclusion, the other all turmoil and publicity. Nor can any one doubt where the sharp division ran between the one and the other. It was at Cana of Galilee, in his first miracle, in the response He felt obliged to make to his mother's simple words, that He took the fatal step which altered the whole complexion of his life. Those words, "They have no wine," must have rung in his ears as the knell of all the quiet happiness, of all the peace, of all the un-

hindered communing with his Father which had been his, and should be his no more: what unnumbered regrets, what sorrowful anticipations, must they not have awakened in his human spirit? To live henceforth in the vortex of a whirlwind; to have no leisure so much as to eat, no time to pray save when others slept; to be the gazing-stock of every eye, the common talk of every tongue; to be followed about, to be thronged and jostled, to be gaped upon, to be hunted up and down by curious vulgar crowds;¹ to be hated, and detested, and defamed, and blasphemed; to be regarded as a public enemy; to be watched and spied upon, and trapped, and taken as a notorious criminal;—who shall say how dreadful the prospect of this was to his pure and therefore sensitive soul? Who is there that has been obliged by his duty to stand in the public eye, to be the talk of malicious tongues, the butt of scurrilous newspapers, even to a small degree, but knows how keen the suffering is to one who loves quiet and retirement? And *we* have our homes, our holidays of rest; *He* had no home and no rest. The “fierce light which beats upon a throne” may be very hard to bear; but those who sit on thrones can command at least a measure of privacy and seclusion. He was always in the midst of friends and foes. The storm and strife of tongues which touches us now and then, and scathes us, and makes us writhe, never ceased to beat upon his un-

¹ Those who would gain a vivid idea of the intolerable publicity and bustle in which our Lord's life was spent after He had begun to work miracles, even among the more friendly Galileans, should study the first chapter of St. Mark in the Original, and note especially the telling expression in verse 36.

sheltered head; it raged around Him and about Him more and more, until at last it caught Him and dashed Him, faint and bleeding, upon the Cross of Calvary. Does any one think that Christ was indifferent to all this? Will any think it wrong, or out of place, to impute to Him a horror, a shrinking, most intense? How could He, having any human feeling, help shuddering as He stepped across the threshold, and entered upon that scene of publicity, of contradiction, of contention, of blasphemy, in which He was to spend the rest of his days on earth?

It was, I repeat distinctly, the exercise of his miraculous gifts which entailed upon Him a publicity so painful and so unmitigated. As a teacher merely, the curiosity, the attention, the hostility He would have provoked, would have been comparatively tolerable. Many a one, then and since, has given himself out to be some great one, and yet lived and died comparatively unmolested. It was the fatal power of working miracles, and the readiness to use that power for others, which robbed its owner of all chance of peace or rest, and gave such an awful intensity to the passions which were stirred up about Him. Whether He sought a breathing space from the incessant demands upon Him in the heathenish coasts of Tyre and Sidon on one side, or in the houseless wilderness on the other, still He could not be hid; still He was followed by crowds in whom desire of getting something from Him was stronger even than curiosity to see Him work a miracle.

And yet no one seems to have noticed or under-

stood the strong repugnance which our Lord shewed to using his miraculous powers—a repugnance so natural and inevitable that it might have been augured before-hand—a repugnance which is attested by many a passage in the Gospels, and, as it seems to me, most vividly by those words of sad expostulation, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.” If we once understand this truly human and wholly blameless shrinking from publicity on the part of our Lord, we shall see directly the meaning of that oft-repeated injunction, “See thou tell no man,”—impressed, as St. Mark tells us, by almost threatening gestures (Mark i. 43). On the ordinary theory of our Lord’s miracles it is difficult to see in these words anything but the unmeaning repetition of a formula which He knew would be useless. As usual, the simplest explanation is the only true one: He did really shrink from and deprecate the painful and fatal publicity which the report of his miracles caused. In like manner, the inward distress which He shewed over some of the more remarkable of his miracles—as when He healed the deaf and dumb, and when He raised Lazarus: a distress which has quite puzzled the commentators—had, I doubt not, no more recondite or unreal a cause than this same shrinking of his human spirit from a display of superhuman power, which was painful to Him in itself and dreadful in its consequences.

If it be objected to this view, “Why, then, did He work miracles at all?” it is enough to answer that He did not come to please Himself, but to do his Father’s business. The works which He did were,

as He said, given Him to do ; and He had, morally speaking, no choice but to do them. Having those miraculous gifts He was bound to use them for the good of others ; if He had not used them, He had been less good than many of his servants, who, having exceptional gifts, use them freely for the benefit of their fellows, not minding the trouble or danger to themselves. Given the need and the appeal, and He must satisfy the need to the utmost of his ability, just as we must to the utmost of ours. That his ability extended to miraculous healings and supplyings, was, humanly speaking, a great misfortune to Him ; but it did not alter the moral law which governs the use of gifts. Now here, at Cana, was a need,—they had no wine ; here, too, was the appeal,—his mother's, an indirect one indeed, but made in perfect faith ; add to this the secret intimation that the time was come to use the miraculous gifts entrusted to Him,¹ and no liberty of action remained to Him : He must needs, as the well-beloved Son, take the step so fatal to his own peace.

Here, then, is the secret of that exclamation which has caused so much needless conjecture and so much unfair blame. It was prompted by a certain human repugnance and aversion, it is true ; but these feelings were not excited by his mother or by any fault in her, but by the sad prospect which her words, all unknown to her, called up before his prescient mind.

RAYNER WINTERBOTHAM.

¹ I have assumed that our Lord worked miracles as He forgave sins, *not* by his inherent power as God, but by the *ἐξουσία*, or derived power, or authority, given Him as *Son of Man*. I cannot now argue it, but I am perfectly convinced that it was so. See Matt. ix. 6-8, Luke xiv 28-31, Matt. xxi. 21, John xiv. 12, &c.

THE FIRST EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

CHAPTER VI.

THIS Epistle bristles with sayings which, while they chastised the weakness and blunders of the practical ethics that had manifested themselves in the communities of Asia Minor under the broad and revolutionary teaching of the Apostle, still pierce the thin skin of our modern sociology. In writing to the excitable Galatians (Chap. iii. 28), Paul had declared that in Christ Jesus the difference between the "bond and free," as well as that between "Greek and Jew, male and female," was at an end, because all were "one in Christ." To the Colossians (Chap. iii. 11) he had made a similar statement, and the Churches on the Lycus had been taught, in addition, that the polished cultivated Greek was not to despise "barbarian or Scythian;" that, moreover, there was "neither bond nor free;" that Christ was "all things, and in all persons."

To come nearer home, these very Ephesians (Chap. vi. 8, 9) were told, with other sound advice, "that every man, whether bond or free, should receive from the Lord for whatsoever good thing he might have done," and masters (κύριοι) were reminded that they had "a Master in heaven," with whom there was no respect of persons.

Now a natural consequence of this pungent leaven working among the hundreds of Ephesian bond-slaves was to create a spirit of insubordination. A principle had been proclaimed, on the highest authority, which drove a wedge into the fetters of the slave and must ultimately compel every slave-owner

to manumit his bondsmen. Whenever society shall be interpenetrated with these sublime thoughts, and shall thus embody the Spirit of Christ, slavery will be impossible. It must be remembered, however, that war, forensic oaths, exclusive hereditary rank, the tyranny of fashion, the prejudices of race, the selfish pride of patriotism, the chartered immoralities of trade, the despotism of class legislation and prescription will, under the like circumstances, all likewise perish. The earth, in fact, and the works therein, will be burned up. But it does not therefore follow that the ideal of the kingdom involves that it should suffer violence, and that the violent should take it by force. Christian faith was not a charter of universal civil revolution. The law of its activity was that the leaven should be hidden and work *in* the meal; that the seed should be sown amid thorns; that, even on good ground, the enemy would maliciously sprinkle tares; and that the revolution would take place in every department of human relations, not by forcible efforts to reconstitute society *ab extra*, but by the silent steadfast working of the law of the Spirit of Life in society and in humanity at large, after the manner in which the sanctifying process takes place in individual souls. Hence, if *slaves, under the yoke*, are disposed to act violently as though the framework of Romano-Greek society had been baptized with the Holy Ghost, they would soon find out, not only their grievous mistake, but that the sound words of Christ and his Apostles were already registered against them. Two cases are suggested to Timothy,—(a) the temptation besetting the slave of unbelieving or of heathen masters, and

(b) the special temptation to which the slave of Christian and believing masters was exposed. Mack thinks that the clause "under the yoke," being suggestive of special severity or cruelty, could not be applied to the servitude claimed by believing masters. Whatever may have been the case at Ephesus, I fear that multitudes of professed believers have in later days failed to sustain, by the suavity and unselfishness of their treatment of their dependents, to say nothing of their slaves, the justice of such an antithesis.

The broad statement of the first verse is here contrasted with the conduct due to "believing masters," and is in itself sufficient to shew that two classes or cases are in the mind of the Apostle. The first advice given is, *Let as many as are under the yoke, as slaves*, not proceed to repudiate their social condition on the ground of their Christian faith, but *esteem their own masters*¹ *as worthy of every honour* that is fairly due to them, *in order that the name of God and the doctrine be not blasphemed*, which it would be if every Christian slave gave out the idea that the name of God was the justification of rebellion, and if the ideal of Christian life implied a claim to Christian equality which might be enforced by violence. Grave exegetical difficulty is involved in the bare reference to slave-owners who could be spoken of as faithful and beloved of God. The only explanation is, that such persons, even though they may have softened the incidence of the yoke, and made it less cruel, had not fully conceived the breadth of the command

¹ Cf. Titus ii. 9; *δεσπότης* is here used instead of *κύριος*, and it has the idea of rule less restrained by circumstances or prescription than *κύριος*. The word is applied to God as the Supreme Ruler, Acts iv. 23; also to Christ, Jude 4.

of Christ. Before we condemn these masters, or the Apostle for not bidding them at once to emancipate their slaves, it would be as well to look at home and see how far the most Evangelical professor has accepted the claim of Christ to the unconditional surrender of his heart and life. Paul accepts the position as for the time inevitable, and deals here with the duty of the bond-servant. *Let not those that have believing masters despise them because (i.e. on the ground that) they are brethren.* This serious advice is applicable to many who in these days trade upon the importance given to them by Church membership and practically disobey this injunction : *but let them the rather, or the more, serve these masters, because they who enjoy this benefit, that is the masters, are faithful and beloved (of God).*¹ Such service springing out of Christian love will modify the curse of the slavery and transmute the iron fetters into silken links. Slavery will never be other than out of harmony with the deeper broader principles of the Gospel. No abatement of its curse by kindly treatment or loyal obedience can palliate its violation of that law of brotherhood and of equality which is involved in the union of every believer to the incarnate Son of God. Such a supposition would echo the sophistry of Burke, that "vice can lose half its evil by losing all its grossness." At the same time the duty of the Christian slave of a "believing master" is clearly not to make his Christianity (so long as the relation subsists)

¹ There can be no doubt that οἱ ἀντιλαμβανόμενοι, with the article, is the *subject* of the sentence, and that it refers to the masters, not to the servants. This signification of the word differs slightly from its ordinary use in New Testament and in classical Greek, but is generally accepted.

a justification of unchristian feeling. This practical wisdom is endorsed further by the often recurring advice, "These things teach and exhort."¹ To find in these words an apology for slavery is monstrous. The question of manumission is not discussed. The advice tendered is addressed to the slave rather than to the master, and proves how surely and consistently the New Testament keeps clear of political reconstruction, and how the Gospel of Christ will work by uttering and endorsing spiritual reconstructive principles, rather than by urging the immediate adoption in any sphere of new social or political platforms.

Verse 3.—*If any one teaches other doctrine.* The word here used is only elsewhere found in Chap. i. 3, but cognate combinations render it easy of translation. The word "other" (*ἕτερος*) means doctrine of a different kind, adverse to the principles and teaching of the Apostle. He is not confining his condemnation to some teaching antagonistic to the advice just given, but referring to a much larger group of errors; *and does not consent to or acquiesce in the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The verb *προσέρχασθαι* can be shewn to bear the meaning here assigned to it in Philo, Diodorus Sic, and Irenæus; and, moreover, we see a similar idea involved in the derivative word "proselyte."² The "sound" or "health-giving" word or "teaching" has become a technical phrase with the Apostle;³ and

¹ The *ταῦτα* has been represented by some commentators as referring to the following words, and it may be fairly open to question whether they are not right; but, as Ellicott says, "the prominent position of *ταῦτα* suggests a more immediate connection with what precedes."

² *προσήλυτος*.

³ See Introduction, THE EXPOSITOR, vol. i. p. 309.

here we seem to catch the echo of some Divine words of the Lord Himself circulating in the Church,—words resembling the sublime proverb, “It is more blessed to give than to receive;” or, “Who made me a ruler or judge over you?” or, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;” or, “If any one will follow me, let him take up his cross daily and follow me.” The great discourses of our Lord must have been already within the reach of the Ephesians. The substance of the Gospel of Luke may have been frequently read in their assemblies, and some persons seem already to have begun to criticize and question the meaning and bearing of some of the mighty words of Him who is the Truth. They were refusing to acquiesce, moreover, in *the doctrine which is according to godliness*, those special ideas the direct tendency of which is to promote piety, holy living, and devout relations with God. To resist these grand peculiarities of the Gospel, to despise the holy moralities of the Lord Christ, in virtue of crotchets or whims, or personal self-complacency, or eager hunger after the punctilio of religious observance, or the forms of dead orthodoxy, exposes such a one to the Apostolic condemnation,—*He is stupefied with pride,¹ though, all the while, knowing nothing, but diseased—i.e. “mad upon,”* in contrast to the wholesome influence of the words of Christ—*about questions and strifes of words.* Few things have acted more disastrously upon the Church of Christ than the verbal controversies, the “logomachies” heredenounced. Words are

¹ The root of the verb is *ῥύφος*, “smoke,” “steam,” “mist;” used also of “pride,” which envelopes a man so that he cannot know himself or others.

solemn realities when they contain under them thoughts of priceless value, and then, they cannot be repudiated without treachery or disloyalty; but when "the words" are half understood, and disputants refuse or disdain to admit that they are using the same words in different senses, or different words in the same sense; and when, if dispassionately examined, it might be seen at a glance that the contest was not about things but about the mere words or counters standing for them, then God is dishonoured and the seamless robe of Christ is rent in twain. Such words as "motive," "freedom," "election," "inspiration," "person," "regeneration," "faith," have been the occasion of many obstinate questionings, and much cruel logomachy. Verily *from such causes arise envy, strife, mutual recriminations* (or blasphemies), *evil suspicions, obstinate disputings*¹ *of men corrupted in their mind* (i.e. not merely in the intellectual, but the whole willing and thinking faculty; for it has this meaning not infrequently in Paul's Epistles²), *destitute of the truth* (by a process of mental and moral deterioration which robbed them of what they once possessed). Many a controversialist since has lost his sense of truth by a contentious spirit, and by hypercritical jealousy for words which have changed their meaning. Words must always be the function, mathematically speaking, of two or more minds, and can have no significance

¹ The Received Text reads here *παραδιatribai*, which has the meaning of *diatribai*, or "disputes," depreciated by the compound with *παρά*; the best MSS., and Ellicott, Tischendorf, Alford, read *διαπατριbai*, where *πατριbai*, meaning "friction," or "dispute," is strengthened by *δια* in composition. The former reading would be tautologous.

² Rom. i. 28; Eph. iv. 17; Tit. i. 15; and the accusative with the passive indicates that portion of the subject of the verb where its action mainly lies. See Phil. i. 11, critical reading; 2 Cor. iii. 18.

at all apart from the involuntary convention which confers upon them their meaning. If, then, words are substituted for things, and obstinately contended for, although the thing connoted by them has ceased to exercise any force or attraction, then TRUTH herself is on the wing. One more touch is added in a participial clause—*supposing that godliness is a source of gain*, and acting accordingly, professing the faith with a view to worldly advantage, to an alteration or elevation of social position. Those who are taking this view of the Church or Christianity expose themselves to the severe words of the Apostle. The principal MSS. omit the clause “from such withdraw thyself,” and criticism brings out, by this excision, the close order of the thought.

Verse 6.—*But*, though the false teachers make this mistake, there is a sense in which *godliness with*, or accompanied by, *contentment is a great gain*. The classic writers abound in praise of *contentment*.¹ *Αὐτάρκεια* is satisfaction with one's own circumstances, not worldly sufficiency. It has this secondary meaning in later Greek, and perhaps in 2 Cor. ix. 8. Socrates, in walking through the streets of Athens, was accustomed to say, “How many things there are which I can dispense with.” The noble spirit here referred to is a “dower of inward happiness,” which cannot be overstated. Surely, contentment is gain, without godliness, and this admirable disposition is sometimes born of temperament, or may be due to a freedom from temptation. We are, however, surprised

¹ Seneca, Ep. 87 : *Fecit sibi divitias nihil concupiscendo*. Lucretius, v. 1116 ; *Divitiæ grandes homini sunt vivere parce æquo animo*. Wettstein quotes similar maxims from Philo, Horace, Diodorus Siculus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and others.

to find the suggestion made by this language, that "godliness" is separable from "contentment," and we account for the circumstance by remembering that godliness actually creates certain new temptations to a precisely opposite frame of mind. The struggle of the soul after a right relation with God reveals possibilities, failures, and weaknesses, and, moreover, originates strong desires and passionate yearnings, which themselves need the supplement of true contentment. If this combination, "godliness with contentment," is granted or possessed, there is in it a deeper grander sense than that conceived by the false teachers' *great gain*.

For we brought nothing into the world,—a solemn truth on which moralists have insisted continually. The reading upon which Tischendorf has finally (8th edition) determined is, *because neither are we able to carry anything out*.¹ In other words, the fact of our naked birth into this world anticipates the manner of our departure from it. We slip the mortal coil, bare of all treasure; we can take nothing that we have accumulated, hence the significance of the utter dependence, nakedness, and poverty of our admission to the world. The first clause teaches humility and the second contentment, hushing the idle clamour for riches and luxury and high position. This is the sentence quoted by Polycarp in his Epistle to the Philippians, and which goes so far to prove the antiquity of the Epistle.

Verse 8.—Ellicott has an interesting note on the

¹ The later MSS., many quotations, and most modern editors, preserve the word *δηλον* before *ὅτι*, "it is manifest that;" but, like the curious reading in MS. D., *ἀληθής* before the *ὅτι*, they merely reveal the difficulty of translating the clause without some explanatory term.

force of the particle *δε*, which suggests a certain reservation, and is not equivalent to *οὐν*. *But if* (not therefore) *we have nourishment and covering* (more than raiment, the idea of *shelter* is involved in *σκεπάω*, *σκέπασμα*) *we shall be sufficiently provided*. There is a discussion whether we may give to this passive future a jussive or imperatival meaning, as Luther, De Wette, and Lange have done; but I believe the translation above is more accurate, though the doctrine is difficult to receive, and scarcely compatible with the teaching of Chapter iv. 1-5. We can understand it best by perceiving that the Apostle is here setting himself against the base and truculent compromise with righteousness, of which certain false teachers were guilty; and the blessedness of the condition of "the lily and the sparrow" is enforced by the powerful contrast.

Verse 9.—*They who will*, who plan wishfully to be rich, not those who *are* rich, in this world's wealth; because though it is difficult for them to enter into the kingdom, hazardous even to stoop like loaded camels in passing the narrow gates of the city (the needle's eye), yet it is those who "*trust in*," not those who merely possess, wealth, who all but debar themselves from the joys of the kingdom; nor are we to forget, in this connection, that "with God all things are possible."¹

Those who will be rich fall into temptation—the form of expression suggests the voluntary movement towards this great temptation. Few Christians pray earnestly not to be led into this great temptation to worldliness, selfishness, and pride. Many hope and

¹ Mark x. 24-27.

pray that they may be put into the fire of this trial, and are recklessly confident of victory,—*and a snare* (a very tangle of imperfect and contending motives), *and into many foolish and hurtful lusts*; “foolish,” because no sensible or rational interpretation can be given of the passion of hoarding for its own sake. *ἀνόητος* is the insufficient exercise of the *νοῦς*, or intellect; it is not *ἄφρων* or *ἀσύνετος*.¹ Foolishness is the opposite of wisdom, and is not exactly stupidity. The hoards of the miser are often guarded by cunning and augmented with acuteness and intelligence; but the passion is unwise and injurious. Luther says these lusts are foolish, because hurtful—*such indeed as drown men, pressing them down into destruction and perdition*. It is not so much the gold which hangs like a mill-stone round the neck, but the lust which does the damning work. These two awful words are alike derivatives from the root of *ἄλλυμι*, “to destroy,” and are applied both to the destruction of body and soul. The latter word is mainly used of the soul. The shifts, lies, and lusts which accompany the eager search for wealth have been the theme of moralists in all ages, but never has more been crowded into a sentence. Montaigne would have expanded it into a long essay, Walter Scott into a volume.

Verse 10.—*For the love of money* (a word which is nowhere else used in the New Testament) *is a root of all the evils* (not *THE* root, which would be a statement difficult to understand, and would require a modification of the ordinary meaning of the term “all.” In other words, we may detect in this pas-

¹ Destitute of sense and reasoning faculty.

sion *one* of the noxious sources of all the evils that afflict human life. I do not suppose that by the word *φιλαργυρία* is meant the mere love of the precious metal, or even a lust after the concrete accumulation of tangible wealth, but the passionate desire, by any means, moral or immoral, to secure that which would guarantee the opportunity of satisfying selfish desires. The special peril of the "love of money" consists in this, that it may put on many plausible forms, and, particularly in early life, may be screened from view by a number of flattering titles. Under the name of industry, business habit, laudable enterprise, fidelity to the claims of home or country, even generous ambition and desire for usefulness and influence, the grasping faculty may be secretly indulged and selfishness be enshrined in the heart), *which some, reaching out after* (every commentator has admitted an apparent irregularity in this metaphor. Some, like Bretschneider, have suggested a modification of meaning, such as "giving themselves up to." Mack makes the money, *ἀργύριον*, contained in *φιλαργυρία*, the object of the verb, and indeed in the phrase we cannot but regard the object of the "love" and of the stretching forth of the hand as identical), *have wandered away from the faith* (the ends secured by money and the faith have been always profoundly antagonistic), *and pierced themselves through* (or *all over*¹) *with many sorrows*, gnawings of conscience, bitter memories, cruel disappointments, moral deterioration, inward poverty.

¹ The old Lexicons give the second meaning. Probably *περί* intensifies the action of the verb. Suicer gives a number of proofs of its metaphorical use.

Verse 11.—*But thou, O man of God*—(this phrase is used also in 2 Tim. iii. 17, but, with the exception of St. Peter's reference to the sacred writers under this designation (2 Pet. i. 21), nowhere else does it occur in the New Testament. Still it was a common term enough to denote prophetic men and divine messengers under the old covenant, and in that capacity Timothy might be thus appropriately addressed),—*avoid these things*,—(would that all who have claimed to be “men of God,” in the ecclesiastical sense, had listened to the warning voice! If they had, what deathbed robbery, wanton luxury, hierarchical insolence, vain indulgences, and corrupting worldliness, would the Church have been spared!), *but follow after righteousness, godliness* (i.e. right relations with God, and the true feeling, religious emotions, sacred reverence, which will proceed from these), *faith, love*,—the twin principles of the divine life, the condition of righteousness, and the highest form of godliness, at once the hand that lays hold of Divine mercy and the life of all the virtues; together with *patience*, which, when it has its perfect work, will make the man of God Himself “perfect and entire, lacking nothing.” With these graces, involving endurance of wrong, submission to misunderstanding, persecution and poverty, he will be induced to manifest *gentleness or sweetness of disposition*. This rare word comes last, not because it suggests the least important of all the virtues, nor because it may be regarded as their climax. Probably the novelty of the Christian ideal, the startling elevation into a virtue of a certain characteristic which, in Heathen ethics, had been almost treated as a defect, required for it this

emphatic position. Moreover, a personal knowledge of Timothy's temper and needs may also have supplied an additional reason for the advice.

Verse 12.—*Fight the good fight*, or, "contend earnestly in the good contest." The image is that of the athlete in the games, rather than the soldier in the field *of the faith*. It is impossible to exercise faith without encountering competition and opposition, either from the flesh or the cosmos, from one's own weakness or the angry menaces of unsympathetic intellect. *Lay hold¹ of the eternal life* (the two imperatives following each other without a conjunction imply that the two actions are in a sense simultaneous. The contest of the faith is often this, and nothing but this, to grasp as a prize this invisible, supernatural, divine benediction held out to the eye of faith), *unto which thou wert called, and didst confess the good confession before many witnesses*. Nothing so nerves a man for any duty as the deep persuasion of a divine call. The word rendered confession is of frequent occurrence.² This "good confession" was probably made at Timothy's consecration to the special work to which he had been called by the Holy Ghost and by the Church. Some special moment memorable in his history was probably referred to.³

Such confessions of personal faith, such heart-searching realization of the divine and eternal life, such conscientious pledgings of the outward career

¹ Paul uses *λαμβάνειν* and its compounds in this sense, 1 Cor. ix. 24; Phil. iii. 12.

² Acts xxiii. 8; Rom. x. 10. It is used in the sense of profess, announce, Matt. vii. 23.

³ Ellicott, Huther, think especially of the "ordination" of Timothy.

to the inward calling, are great moments in the life of "men of God." They provide the epochs from which true workers date their highest inspiration. God uses them to encourage fidelity and secure loyalty to the great Captain of salvation. "The good confession" which Timothy "confessed" before many witnesses was based upon "the good confession" made by the Lord Jesus Christ. Another verb, however, is used by the Apostle when speaking of his Lord. Christ uttered the good confession as a "Witness" for God, as a Revealer of the Father, as claiming his own royal dignity, as ministering his very life a ransom for many, and in full view of the cross. I prefer, with Huther and Lange and Davidson, to take the *ἐν* of verse 13 in the sense of *coram*. Nor do I see, with Ellicott and Alford and De Wette, that this reduces the two "confessors" to the same level. "In the presence of Pilate" Christ claimed to be the Lord of men, the King of kings, the Truth itself, and it was a confession which made the arrogant Roman Governor tremble on his judgment seat. That "good confession" doubtless sealed his doom, but it saved the world. With this in view we take the next words, as follows :

Verse 13.—*I give thee charge in the presence of God, who preserveth all things in life, and of Christ Jesus, who testified before Pontius Pilate the good confession,*—(the difference in text between the *ζωογονοῦντος* of the principal uncial MSS., and preferred by Tischendorf, 8th edition, Alford, Ellicott, Lachmann, &c., and the *ζωοποιοῦντος* of the Receptus does not give a very decided difference in meaning, although the latter is limited to the giving, and the

former includes the preservation of, life. It also means to restore to life,² and may here point to the resurrection of Christ and of all men in Him),—*that thou keep the commandment spotless and irreproachable.* The New Testament idiom justifies this translation.³ The commandment is the “law” of the divine life, the “law of liberty,” the whole preceptive aspect of the Gospel of Christ. He who is “under the law to Christ” is bound to obey in such wise that the nature of the commandment itself may suffer neither stain nor reproach, so that, as far as Timothy is concerned, no man must be tempted to think it vain, frivolous, unpractical, or perilous. The commandment is to be kept *until* (up to) *the manifestation* (epiphany) *of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Although so old an interpreter as Chrysostom interprets this expression as referring to the time of Timothy’s death, and although this event would correspond to him in ethical sanction with the epiphany of Christ, yet we see that the Epistles of Paul and the Apocalypse are full of hope concerning the imminent approach, the ultimate, transcendent, sublime manifestation of the Christ, when “every eye shall see Him.” The prophetic faith of the Church has always grasped this great hope as about to be realized. Should the climax or consummation be delayed for milleniums, the Church will always speak of the coming of Christ as “at hand.” The element of time itself is lost in the vision of the Seer. A thousand years are as one day, or as “a watch in the night” when it is passed.

¹ Luke xviii. 33 ; Acts vii. 19.

² 1 Sam. ii. 6.

³ Cf. Chap. v. 22 ; 2 Cor. xi. 9 ; James i. 27, where qualifying adjectives are in apposition with the object of the verb *τηρεῖν*.

Every age echoes the cry, "Behold, He cometh." It is the stimulus of faith, the nurse of hope and love.

Verse 15.—*Which* (epiphany, which "divine event, to which the whole creation moves"), *in his* (God's) *own appropriate seasons* (these words are in the plural, because there is a succession of seasons and opportunities during which the *epiphany* is anticipated and the promise of its final glory renewed), *the only and blessed Potentate will reveal.* There is no need to imagine any reference to a full-blown Gnosticism in this phraseology. "The only God" is an expression used in John xvii. 3, and *Αυτάωτης* is applied to God in Luke i. 52, Acts viii. 27, and frequently in the Apocryphal writings. The phrase cannot be exactly paralleled in the Pauline writings, but cf. Rom. xvi. 24, and Chap. i. 17. St. Paul merely gives the assurance that He in whose hands are "the times and seasons" "waits patiently" from no deficiency on his side of either power or authority. Further, a helpful thought, to which the writer had already given expression, reappears in the epithet "blessed," or "happy." The Sovereign Arbiter of time and judgment is the "happy God"—the Supreme Power is infinitely blessed. Then follows a sublime doxological burst of awful praise. The blessed Potentate is *the King of kings and Lord of lords*, or "King of those who reign, Lord of those who rule." Compare similar expressions in Rev. i. 5; xvii. 14; xix. 16 referring to the dignity of the Son of God. All authority is in his hands,—emperors, proconsuls, victors in the games, sages, philosophers, and kings of men, will not conceal Him when the hour has come; and He

has moreover infinite time at his disposal, for He adds,—*who alone, or only, has immortality* by inherent nature and right. All others have it as his gift and by his permission. The very idea of eternity is given to us primarily as a characteristic of the Divine nature—*dwelling in the unapproachable light*. This idea finds abundant confirmation in the symbolism of Scripture. The veiling of the seraphs' faces by their wings, the guarding of the bounds of Sinai, the significance of the Holy of Holies, the splendid imagery of the Psalms, where God clothes and hides Himself in light, are sufficient vindications of this solitary use in the New Testament of the expression.¹ *Whom no man hath seen, or can see, to him be honour and eternal might. Amen.* Mack has rightly connected these closing words with the *καίροῦς ἰδίου* which the Father has put in his own power. This magnificent description is not incompatible with the vision of God granted to the "pure in heart" (Matt. v. 8). They that see Christ, see the Father. They "look into a mirror, in an enigma," and behold his glory and are changed into the same image. It cannot be "until the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Christ," that we shall have the full manifestation of the eternal, invisible God. This doxology may already have been sung in the Church at Ephesus, and the Apostle was probably quoting familiar words. There is a rhythmical ring in them which is capable of exhibition in lyrical form, and which must, I think, have fitted them for liturgic use in the Christian congregation. This holy awe and hush of soul in the presence

¹ Cf. John i. 18; 1 John iv. 12; Matt. xi. 27.

of the Holy One, and when using the name or grasping the idea of the blessed God, is eminently Pauline, and the spirit which induced it is profoundly Christian.¹ The entire charge to Timothy, which is based on his avoidance of the temptations to wealth and urges the absorption of his mind in grander nobler thoughts, although it has burst into a triumphant song, has not, however, diverted Paul's mind from the theme then occupying it. The love of money is a root of all evils, but there are those who are "*rich in this present world.*"² Chrysostom says, in contrast to those who are rich in the world to come; but I do not think that this can be pressed, because the Apostle seems to regard them as men who may become rich towards God. *Charge such*, says he, *to be not high minded* (cf. Rom. xi. 20 and xii. 16), *nor to have hoped, so as now to hope, in the uncertainty of riches* (which take to themselves wings), *but in God.* "The uncertainty of riches" is a stronger and more rhetorical phrase than "uncertain riches." Trust in the uncertainty itself is a powerful augmentation of the main idea. The play upon the prepositions ἐν and ἐν in this verse is very like the style of St. Paul, though the varieties of the readings prevent our laying any confident emphasis upon the usage. The *living God* of the Receptus is not sustained by the best editors. *Who affordeth to us all things richly for enjoyment.* This is a reminiscence of ideas already insisted upon in the Epistle.

¹ Cf. Rom. i. 25; ix. 5; xi. 36; xvi. 26; Gal. i. 5; Ephes. iii. 21; Phil. iv. 20.

² The connection of the ἐν τῇ νῦν αἰῶνι with the πλουσίοις is justified notwithstanding the absence of the article.

The rich are not to trust in riches, but in the God who gives them. His signature upon the *all things* doubles their value. Charge them, says Paul,—

Verse 18.—*To do good works, to be benevolent and abundant in their charities, and to be rich in beautiful deeds.* Τὸ ἀγαθὸν is good done to others; τὸ κάλον is that which is good, honourable, and beautiful in itself, *to be free in distributing, ready to communicate*; these words are nearly synonymous; *treasuring up for themselves a good foundation against the coming (time), that they may lay hold of the life indeed.* The “foundation” on which a man may stand and take possession of the true life, on which he may build for himself a holy rest, is contrasted with the uncertainty of riches that fly away.

Verse 20.—*Oh, Timothy, guard the deposit of the faith entrusted to thee.* There are three passages in this Epistle where this word παραθήκη is used with the verb φυλάττειν. In 2 Tim. i. 12, God, who has given the παραθήκη to Paul, is the guardian of it; and in verse 14 Timothy himself is bidden once more to guard it faithfully. The common interpretation in 2 Tim. i. 12, which regards it as the “soul” which Paul entrusted to God to “keep,” would be comprehensible, but is not altogether clear; but “soul” would be very unsuitable in either of the other passages. Vincentius Lirinensis suggested the interpretation given above, which is, in the main, accepted by Alford, Ellicott, Wiesinger, Mack, and Fairbairn. Paul, Timothy, and every Christian worker since, have received a sacred trust of truth, a deposit of faith; and they are each and all to see that they hand this on to the next gene-

ration unimpaired, neither sacrificed by vague compromises nor stereotyped into lifeless forms. There is some difficulty in applying this meaning in 2 Tim. i. 12; but with a slight modification it conveys a momentous truth. Paul was on the point of laying down the sword with which he had fought many battles. It must be wielded henceforth by younger hands, and would confront new forms of falsehood. It was a cheering reflection to him that God Himself would keep it. A whole generation might lose sight of it, or even abuse it, but he was "persuaded" that God would vindicate it, and in the great day reveal its transcendent value. Timothy is here charged to guard the faith entrusted to him with loyal enthusiasm, *avoiding the profane emptiness, vain sounds, and antitheses of a falsely-called gnosis*. It is not likely that the Apostle referred here to the Gnostic antitheses between Law and Gospel, between the Supreme God and the Creator of the world, so current in the second century, although the germs of these ideas were already active. His heart was grieved and pierced by the "contradiction" offered to his Gospel on the part of the false teachers of whom he has said so much. Paul rejoiced in a true *gnosis*, which was rooted in faith and developed and sustained by the Spirit of Christ. His enemies were undermining, by a falsely-called science, the truth of Christ, *which knowledge certain persons professing, have missed their aim in the matter of the faith*. Having lost their way in the beguiling pleasaunces round and near to Doubting Castle, and being grappled with in this enchanted ground by

Giant Despair, they have either been consigned to his dungeons, or left to fumble and tumble among the tombs, proving, as "the shepherds" said, the truth of the words, "He who wandereth out of the way of understanding, shall abide in the congregation of the dead."

"GRACE BE WITH YOU, AMEN."

H. R. REYNOLDS.

THE VINDICTIVE PSALMS VINDICATED.

CONCLUSION.

IN Psalm lviii. it is not the imprecations which it contains that constitute its chief difficulty. It is quite true that some of these, to the cursory reader, wear an appearance of malevolence; but on examination, as we shall see presently, they are found to be capable of an easy and satisfactory explanation. The real difficulty lies in the vindictiveness and ferocity which seem to have inspired the 10th verse—"The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked." And so real a difficulty has this been felt to be that even Dr. Perowne, whose defence of the Vindictive Psalms accords in the main with that to which this and preceding papers have been devoted, abandons—if I understand him aright—this and similar passages as indefensible.¹ We can hardly be wrong, therefore, in regarding this verse as a *crux criticorum* and as likely to test our theory more severely than anything which has as yet come before us.

But before we attempt to vindicate even this

¹ Note on Psalm cix.

verse, let us first dispose of the imprecations of verses 6-9, which may be done in comparatively few words. That they are directed against the *wicked* is obvious. The Psalm is universally allowed to be a "protest against unrighteous judges."¹ Such perverters of the justice they were appointed to administer have ever been the scourges of the East,² precisely as in our own times they have been the reproach and the ruin of Turkey. The men the Psalmist has in view, so far from holding the scales of justice evenly, "weighed out" of them only violence and wrong (verse 2). So baleful was their influence, he could only compare it to the deadly virus of the serpent (verse 4), and so dangerous were they, so desperately and irrecoverably wicked, that the foul adder, deaf to the incantations of the charmer, was not more to be dreaded, or more to be despaired of (verse 5).

And such being the case, seeing that such men could not be reclaimed, and that no earthly power

¹ Perowne: The aim and object of this Psalm is obscured and almost lost to view in the mis-translation of the Authorized Version: "Do ye indeed speak righteousness, O congregation?" (verse 1). It is true that considerable doubt still attaches to the word here interpreted "congregation;" but critics are generally agreed that this rendering is indefensible, and that the reproofs of the Psalm are levelled at corrupt and profligate judges. The statement of Ewald, "Für לְאֱלֹהִים ist unstreitig לְאֱלֹהִים zu lesen," i.e. for "O congregation," read "O ye gods," is perhaps too positive; but it seems to me to have much to recommend it. It is admitted that rulers and judges, especially among the Heathen, assumed the name and enjoyed the honour of gods (or demi-gods), nor are they entirely unknown by that designation in Holy Writ. Cf. Exod. xxi. 6, "His master shall bring him to the judges" (Hebrew, gods); Exod. xxii. 8, 9; Psal. lxxxii. 1-5; and the defective form לְאֱלֹהִים (for לְאֱלֹהִים) is found in Exod. xv. 11. The absence of any word corresponding to this in the LXX. and other Versions may, however, favour the conclusion that it has been interpolated by a transcriber.

² Cf. 1 Sam. viii. 3; Isa. v. 23; Prov. xxix. 4; St. Luke xviii. 2; &c.

ould or would check them, is it to be wondered at that the Psalmist cries to the Supreme Judge for help, and prays that the power which they possess for evil, and which they only use for evil, may be broken? For this is precisely what he does pray for in verse 6. Whether we understand him in the first hemistich ("Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth") to keep up the figure of the serpent, or whether we regard him with some commentators as here changing abruptly to his favourite image of a lion (the image of the second clause), the meaning is still the same. The poison of the serpent, it is well known, is not in the tongue, but in a little sac at the root of the fang, or tooth. And it is the pressure of the tooth upon this sac which injects the venomous deadly fluid into the wound which at the same moment it has made. It is necessary consequently, in order to render the serpent innocuous, to extract all its teeth,¹ and in this simple expedient, it is very generally believed, the art or trick of charming consists.² Be that, however, as it may, it is clear that this expression, "Break their teeth," &c., is the precise poetic equivalent of "Deprive them of their power to harm." And none other is the meaning of the second clause, "The jaw teeth of of the young lions break out, O Lord."³ In neither clause, consequently, is there anything vindictive.

¹ "The way to disarm a snake is to deprive him of his teeth."—Hammond, Annotations on Psalm lix. 6.

² Roberts, "Oriental Illustrations of the Sacred Scriptures." See, however, Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," art. "Serpent charming."

³ Cf. *Psa.* iii. 7, "Thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly."—"An image taken from beasts of prey, which, when their jaw is broken and their teeth are extracted, can no longer do harm."—Gesenius *in loc.*

Each is a humble petition for the repression of wrong-doing, for the defeat of wicked counsels. And the same remark applies to the language of verses 7-9. If the Psalmist would have these unjust and rapacious judges pass away like the running brook (verse 7); if he would have their arrows—their instruments and agencies of mischief—broken (*ibid.*); if he would fain have them waste away as the slug (verse 8) seemed to him to do,¹ marking its track by a loss of its substance; if he would see them suddenly swept away, before their plots were ripe (verse 9),² as he had seen the fresh kindled camp fires of the desert, fed with quick thorns, whirled into the air by the tempestuous simoom long before the cauldron was heated or its contents cooked; it is always for the same reason, that only thus could their base designs be defeated and the peace of society be insured. In the interests of religion, of justice, of morality, he is compelled to pray for their more or less sudden destruction. For their destruction, not merely because there was no hope of their recovery, but also because their sin had been high-handed and notorious, and therefore the retribution must be conspicuous and exemplary. We are led to the

¹ By reason of the slime which it deposits as it crawls along. See Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible," art. "Snail;" and Gesenius, "Thesaurus," *sub. voc.* שִׁנְיָה.

² "The meaning of this obscure and difficult verse appears to be, 'Before your pots feel the thorn (*i.e.* before the fire of the thorns makes itself felt), so be it (the thorn) quick or dry, the whirlwind will sweep it away.'"—"The Speaker's Commentary."—"The imagery seems to be drawn from an incident of desert life. A party are cooking the flesh they have taken in hunting; but they have barely begun to do so when the fierce *samûm* wind rushes on them and sweeps all away."—Kay.

conclusion, consequently, that the so-called imprecations of verses 6-9 are lawful and right, and that they are the breathings, not of revenge, but of justice and piety.

We now turn to verse 10. The prayers for retribution found in verses 7, 8, pass, in verse 9, into a prediction of the sudden and complete overthrow of the wicked. The writer sees them already scattered by the whirlwind of Divine wrath; he sees them overtaken by the vengeance they have provoked and for which he has prayed. And then he says that the sight will afford joy, not to himself alone, but to all "the righteous." But is there anything to offend us here? Nay, why should it not be so? Can any reason be assigned why those who had longed and prayed for the vindication of right should not rejoice over the answer to their prayers? Was it possible for righteous men, however they might mourn over the wretched fate of those on whom the vengeance had fallen, to view the overthrow of the oppressor, the re-establishment of right and the public vindication of God's providence and holiness without a thrill of thankful joy? No, but the more "righteous" the beholder, the greater would be his rejoicing over the triumph of righteousness and truth.

And in confirmation of this view we have the striking fact that precisely such a joy as is pictured to us here is prescribed in the New Testament: "Rejoice over her," we read (Rev. xviii. 20), "thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." Is it, then, the case that a triumph and an exultation which is enjoined upon the celestial host, and which is commendable in

apostles and prophets, is nevertheless reprehensible in the Psalmists? Or, is it not rather the case that the Psalmists, like the apostles and the heavenly host, may rejoice, and ought to rejoice, at the just judgments of God on the despisers of his law and the destroyers of his people.

But, allowing all this, still it may be asked, Is it right to dance over the grave even of the victims of God's judgments? Is it right for the righteous to "wash his feet in the blood of the wicked"?

We must carefully consider what this last-quoted phrase implies. It is often explained as though it derived its imagery from the field of battle. The Lord of Hosts, it is said, has given the victory to the righteous. The armies of the alien are put to flight; the scene of the conflict is strewn with dead bodies and steeped in gore. Over it rush, in hot pursuit of the fugitives, the soldiers of the Lord; and as they press onward over the bleeding and the "garments rolled in blood," their feet are necessarily stained with the "red rain." Hence, according to this view, "the language simply amounts to a declaration of complete victory;" it is "simply a poetic exaggeration of the fact that in treading the battle-field . . . their feet shall be wet with blood."¹

I should have been glad, on some accounts, if I had found myself at liberty to accept this explanation, for it certainly affords an easy solution of the difficulty. But while allowing that the imagery *may* be taken from the shock or the sequel of battle (as in *Psa. lxxviii. 23*), I am unable to accept this as an adequate exegesis of the phrase, "*Wash* his feet in

¹ Hibbard, "The Psalms," p. 116.; similarly Phillips, vol. ii. p. 21.

blood,"—an expression which appears to me to be idiomatic, and the force of which elsewhere is too clear to permit us to doubt its significance here. For example, in Job xxix. 6, we find the words, "I washed my steps with butter" (literally, curds), where we have evidently "a common figure for overflowing abundance."¹ Precisely the same idea is conveyed by the expression found in Genesis xlix. 11, "He washed his garments in wine," &c. Consequently, the washing of the feet in blood must surely signify, as I find Dr. Hammond² interprets it, "the plentiful effusion of blood." And, such being the meaning of the phrase, the only question that remains to be considered is this: "Was it right, was it necessary by Jewish law, that there should be this plentiful effusion of blood? In other words, was it necessary, not only that these profligate sinners should be destroyed, but that they should be destroyed signally and unsparingly? We have already proved the first of these propositions,³—that only by the summary and exemplary destruction of open and incorrigible offenders could justice be satisfied and God vindicated. The second follows as a matter of course. For, if blood needed to be shed, then obviously, it was needful that a sufficiency of blood should be shed; sufficient, that is to say, to satisfy the demands of justice and to establish the righteousness of the Most High. In the eye of the pious Israelite every drop of the blood of these impious men was a "token of the righteous judgment of God" (2 Thess. i. 5). And if this was right, if this plentiful blood-shedding

¹ "The Speaker's Commentary," *in loco*.

² Annotations, p. 215.

³ Page 215.

was God's good pleasure, what should hinder the righteous from rejoicing at the sight? There had been a dearth of temporal retribution. The judges, the delegates and representatives of God, had sinned flagrantly, openly, and with impunity—to the distress of the pious and the scandal of true religion. When at last the thunderbolt fell, and the blood that proved a special Providence (verse 11) was poured, is it to be wondered at that those who had hungered, and thirsted, and prayed—with the purest motives—for the retribution, should rejoice in it, and rejoice too that it was signal and sufficient?¹ But *was* it with the purest of motives? some one may say. In the last verse of the Psalm the writer tells us what his motives were,—and they were these: the triumph of justice, the confusion of atheism, the vindication of the righteousness of God. He desires and prays, he hungers and thirsts, for the terrible vengeance, not for his own secret satisfaction, but because it will prove to all gainsayers that “verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily there is a Deity² that judgeth in the earth.”

PSALM LIX.

That this Psalm was really composed under the circumstances with which its superscription connects

¹ The words, “He shall wash his feet,” &c., do not necessarily imply that the righteous should exult in the blood-shedding. They may be merely a prophecy that the vengeance should be abundant and complete. I have already pointed out (THE EXPOSITOR, vol. iii. p. 45) that in Psa. lxxviii. 23, similar words are found in the mouth of God Himself. Compare also the prediction of Psa. cx. 6.

² Kay quotes, from Alison's “History of Europe,” a story which admirably illustrates this verse. After the execution of Robespierre a poor man came up, and, seeing the corpse, exclaimed, “Ay, Robespierre, there is a God!”

it, is to me simply inconceivable,¹ despite the ready acceptance which this inscription has met with at the hands of some modern critics. To me it seems to be every way much more probable that the Psalm was inspired by the plots of the Philistines against David during his sojourn with Achish at Gath.² (1 Sam. xxi. 10-15). But whatever the *genesis* of the Psalm, the imprecations—so far as it will be necessary for us to notice them—are found in verses 11-13. "Slay them not, lest my people forget; scatter them by thy power; and bring them down. . . . Let them even be taken in their pride. . . . Consume them in wrath; consume them, that they may not be."

In verse 11, that is to say, the writer prays God that his enemies may *not* be summarily destroyed. "He would see them come to a lingering end; he would have God take them, as it were, in their own infatuation; he would see them reel and stagger in the intoxication of their own pride and under the strong buffeting of God's hand, a spectacle and a warning to all, before they are finally cast down."³ Of this prayer Perowne writes: "It is a very fearful one." In verse 13 "he would have

¹ The repeated allusions to the Heathen (verses 5, 8, 13), the statements of verses 6, 14, and the general language and tenor of the Psalm are incompatible with this view. But, above all, it is, I think, morally certain that a poem penned under the circumstances recorded in 1 Sam. xix. 11-18 would have been directed against Saul, not against men who were merely his tools.

² Psa. xxxiv. is referred by its title to this period; but the a crostic arrangement points to a later date. Of course, the identification of Psa. lix. with this, or any other, period of David's history (or of Jewish history) must necessarily be precarious; but this connection seems as probable as any other that has been suggested.

³ Perowne, *in loco*.

his enemies destroyed at last, but only *after* they had been, by a protracted miserable existence, a warning to men."¹

Now, what apology can be offered for such imprecations as these? *We* should scruple to lay such cruel curses² even on the carrion of our race. What can justify them in the lips of the Psalmist? I submit that the following considerations afford a complete vindication of these words:

1. The men against whom this terrible vengeance is denounced were not merely "workers of iniquity" and "men of blood" (verse 2, *Heb.*); not merely perfidious (verse 5, *Heb.*), blasphemous, impious (verses 7, 8), but they were also plotting against the life of the writer (verse 3), they were conspiring to murder an innocent man (verses 3, 4). It is evident, therefore, that his curses were not wholly causeless.

2. The prayer of verse 12, "Let them be taken in their pride," is, practically, a prayer that their sin may bring its own punishment; that the pride which "goeth before destruction" (Prov. xvi. 18) may procure their fall. And, therefore, it is according to the will and purpose of God, who "taketh" (same word in all three passages) the wise in their own craftiness (Job v. 13), and the wicked in their own iniquities (Prov. v. 22). Nor is the denunciation of verse 12, "consume them," &c., at all disproportionate to their deserts. True, it contemplates their

¹ Perowne, *in loco*.

² It is perhaps worth remarking, as shewing what has been the popular idea of these "cursing Psalms," that the Welsh of the present century have recited them to put a ban upon their enemies. (See "Contemporary Review," vol. xxvii. p. 403.)

destruction, but that is precisely what they had planned for the Psalmist. This prayer, therefore, is just, because it is *retaliatory*. Besides, as we have already seen,¹ the writer had been taught, and that repeatedly, that "destruction was the doom denounced by God against the enemies and oppressors of his people." What wonder, then, if he prays for it here?

3. The suffering and disgrace which he desires for them before their final destruction, he desires, by his own shewing, not for the sake of the suffering and disgrace, but for the sake of others, for the general good. He believed that the exemplary punishment of these persecuting Heathen was necessary for the instruction and warning of the chosen people. If they were destroyed forthwith, the lesson of their fate would soon be forgotten. If, on the other hand, they were kept alive, a spectacle to the world and a public token of the just judgment of God, then "all Israel" would "hear and fear and do no more any such wickedness." It was such thoughts as these which prompted the prayer, "Slay them not," &c., a prayer for a punishment which, if more than the *crime*, was not more than the *occasion* demanded.²

4. The spirit in which the Psalmist prayed, and the object he had in view, are described in verse 13. It was not the desire for vengeance that inspired him; it was not the gratification of a fierce hatred that he set before him: it was, as in the preceding Psalm, that God might be vindicated and society purged and evil-doing repressed—"that men" might "know

¹ THE EXPOSITOR, vol. iii. pp. 194, 195.

² Ibid. vol. iv. p. 57.

that God ruleth in Jacob and unto the ends of the earth." (Cf. also verses 16, 17.)¹

We see, then, that the imprecations of this Psalm, interpreted on the principles we have laid down, are cleared of all suspicion of malevolence. There is one sentence, however, which still remains to be noticed. It is the second clause of verse 10: "God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies,"—words which have a thoroughly vindictive ring, and upon which something must be said. All the more so, as a similar expression is found in four other places in the Psalter (Pss. liv. 7; xcii. 11; cxii. 8; and cxviii. 7), and it is one, therefore, which is forced upon the notice of the reader.

Now the vindictiveness obviously lies in the words "my desire." Of course, "the desire" of the Psalmist may have been, and in view of what has been advanced, it would be but reasonable to suppose it was, a righteous desire for the glory of God, and not in the least a malevolent longing to witness the sufferings of his enemies; but still, I apprehend, the idea which the words convey to most minds is that of the long-cherished and gluttonous desire for

¹ It may be well to remark here that the imprecations found in the Authorized Version of verses 14, 15, "And at evening *let them return*," &c., may, and perhaps should, be interpreted as comminations, "They shall return," &c. Some writers, indeed (Delitzsch, Cook, Kay, &c.), see in verse 14 simply a repetition of the *statement* of verse 6; but I agree with Perowne (following Calvin, Hammond, &c.), that, "a different turn is given to the expression. There the conduct of his enemies is described; here their punishment." But, however the words are interpreted, one thing is clear, viz., that the punishment denounced or predicted, if any is denounced or predicted, is a just and equitable one, for it is based on the law of equivalents. As they had meted to him (verse 6) it should be measured to them again.

revenge. It is, therefore, proper to observe, what will hardly have escaped the notice of the reader, that these two words are not found in the Hebrew text. All that the Original conveys is this, "God shall make me *look upon* mine enemies," and in Psa. liv. 7, "Mine eye hath *looked upon* mine enemies." And the LXX. contains no more than the Hebrew. Moreover the two words (רָאָה ב) on which the interpretation turns, are found in a great number of passages, where the Authorized Version simply renders them by "look," "see," or some such word. Such are Pss. xxii. 17 (*Heb.* 18), "They *stare upon* me;" xxvii. 13, "*to see* the goodness of the Lord," &c.; xxxvii. 34; cvi. 3; Job iii. 9; xx. 17; Obad 12. And a glance at the Hebrew Lexicon (*e.g.* Gesenius, *sub. voc.* רָאָה) will shew that all that the expression strictly and necessarily means is to "look at,"—the idea of looking at (1) with complacency and triumph, or (2) with sorrow, or (3) with scorn, being sometimes read between the lines, but at the same time being always subsidiary, and therefore not to be forced into the text. The holy Psalmists would probably look down on their prostrate foes "calmly and leisurely, as a conqueror might on the field of battle."¹ They would see them smitten by the hand of God with some such chastened feelings as "Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore" (Exod. xiv. 30)—feelings of thankfulness that Jehovah had granted them deliverance and "plentifully rewarded the proud-doer." And who shall blame them for this? Who shall blame them if they looked on their enemies even with triumph

¹ Kay.

and exultation? For they would see in their destruction, in their blood, not merely so much humiliation and human suffering and death; they would see in it "that great work which the Lord did" (Exod. xiv. 31), and which, therefore, must be just and right, and every way a matter for rejoicing.

PSALM LXIX.

Whether this Psalm was written, as Hitzig and others maintain, and as seems not at all unlikely, by Jeremiah when lying in the cistern of Malchiah the son of Hammelech¹ (Jer. xxxviii. 6; cf. Lam. iii. 53-55), it was certainly composed by some one who at the time had grim death staring him in the face. The man who wrote these words, whoever he may have been, either was or was like one struggling for life in the waters, and expecting every moment to be engulfed in the rising flood (verses 1, 2, 14, 15). He was one, too, who had long suffered bitter persecution and wrong. Long had his name been a byword (verse 11); long had it figured in coarse jest and ribald song (verse 12). Friendship and sympathy had he none (verse 20). His nearest and dearest, his own mother's sons even,

¹ It is no argument against Jeremiah's authorship of the Psalm that verses 22, 23, are ascribed by St. Paul (Rom. xi. 9, 10) to David, "David" with the New Testament writers being simply a *nomen generalissimum* for the Book of Psalms. Nor is it of any moment that "we are expressly told that there was no water in" the cistern of Malchiah (Canon Cook), for the words of verses 2, 14, 15, may have been used figuratively by Jeremiah, as well as by any other writer. It is clear, indeed, from their use elsewhere (Psa. cxxiv. 4, 5; Isa. xliii. 2, &c.) that the expressions are common figures for a deadly peril. But his imprisonment in the cistern (which was designed for water) may very well have suggested these figures to his mind.

were estranged and hostile (verse 8). And now, at last, his confusion and wretchedness have reached their culmination; now the implacable hate of his enemies, who are numberless (verse 4), seems about to triumph. The grave they have digged for him threatens to close upon him (verse 15). And yet he is guiltless, guiltless at any rate of the charges brought against him (verse 4). More than that, the agonies he has endured and the sharper agonies still in store for him have been incurred, one and all, in the holy cause of religion. He is a *martyr* in the primary sense of the word. Because of his stedfast witness for God and the truth (verse 9) is he now in the jaws of death. But he will not perish without an earnest prayer for deliverance. Out of the horrible pit and the miry clay rises his *De profundis* to Heaven. Powerless in the grip of his foes, he appeals to the Avenger of men, to Him who "helpeth them to right that suffer wrong." With strong crying and tears he pleads for dear life. Is he to be abandoned to his fate? Is the Judge of all the earth to look on, silent and unpitying, whilst his loyal servant is done to death? Are the righteous too to be perplexed and put to shame by the un-avenged shedding of innocent blood? (Verse 6.) Surely, God will deliver him; yes, and will recompense his would-be murderers. For he now prays for recompense. The so-called imprecations of verses 22-28 (by which we now find ourselves confronted) are nothing else, as I shall hope to prove presently, than prayers for a just and equitable retribution, prayers such as on a most memorable occasion (2 Chron. vi. 23) had been commended to

the pious Hebrew. He prays, in the first place (verse 22), that "their table may become a snare," but it is because they had made *his* table a snare; because, with ingenious cruelty, they had stealthily introduced gall (or possibly poison) into his food.¹ As they have done to him so he would have it done unto them. He prays again that their table may be a trap to them *in their security*;² that when they feasted themselves without fear (cf. verse 12, the "drunkards"³) then vengeance may overtake them at their board; but here again he only asks for *re-tribution*, i.e. for a paying back in their own coin. When *he* was secure and unsuspecting they

¹ It makes little difference to the argument if we read, with the Authorized Version, "They gave me gall for my meat;" but I am almost inclined to think that the Original points not only to cruelty and mockery, but to attempted murder—murder by the favourite Eastern device of secret poisoning. The words *may* be rendered "they put poison into my food" (as Ewald, "Man gab in meine Speise Gift," though he interprets the expression figuratively), and I prefer this rendering for the following reasons: (1) The ordinary significance of נָתַן is "to put into." (See, e.g. Gen. i. 17; ix. 13, &c.) (2) This is the rendering of the LXX. (καὶ ἔδωκαν ἐς τὸ βρῶμα μου, κ.τ.λ.), and of the Versions generally. (3) κεφαλῆ, literally "head," here translated "gall," is a word of doubtful meaning, but Gesenius, followed by the highest authorities, suggests that it designates the "poppy" (we speak of "poppy heads"), a poisonous plant. Be that as it may, it is indisputable that the word elsewhere (Deut. xxxii. 33; Job xx. 14; cf. verse 16) indicates something poisonous. (4) This rendering lends a fresh significance to the imprecation of verse 22, "Let their table become a snare," &c. They had concealed a snare *for his life* in his food.

² I am unable to decide whether לְשָׁלוֹם should be rendered, as by most modern writers, "to them in peace"—i.e. when they are in peace and unsuspecting—or, as by the LXX. (εἰς ἀνταπόδοσιν) and "all the older Versions" (Perowne), "for retributions." If the latter, then the prayer is *expressly* a prayer for a punishment correspondent with the crime; if the former, it amounts to no more than this.

³ Ewald remarks that the Psalmist's oppressors were probably men given to rioting and feasting.

had mingled his food with gall. The prayer of verse 23, "Let their eyes be darkened, . . . and make their loins to tremble," may possibly be another petition for retribution;—"retribution for their malignant joy in gazing upon the sorrows of the righteous;"¹ but it seems preferable to see in it an earnest cry that they may be checked in their wickedness; that the understandings which have conceived such foul designs may be darkened, and that the limbs which have executed them may be paralysed. (Cf. Isa. vi. 10 and Nahum ii. 10.) Verse 24 needs no remark. If the righteous God is furious with the wicked (Psa. vii. 11), why should not the Psalmist pray that his anger (same word) may be openly displayed? Why should not he pray, again, as he does in verse 25, that the Divine anger may result in their complete destruction, and that their desolate habitations alone may remain as a memorial of their folly, and of the just judgments of God. To pray thus was, as we have already seen, a simple religious duty. We may now turn, therefore, to the imprecations of verses 27, 28.

Now, it has been already stated,² that there is some reason to think that these words, like the curses of Psa. cix., are a citation. I do not propose, however, to adduce any evidence in support of this view, for I cannot persuade myself that it is conclusive. It will be necessary for me, therefore, to assume that the words are the Psalmist's, and as such I shall hope to vindicate them.

As to the first hemistich. The meaning which these words, "Add iniquity unto their iniquity,"

¹ Canon Cook.

² THE EXPOSITOR, vol. iii. p. 28.

convey to most minds is, I apprehend, this, "To the iniquities which they have actually committed, let others of which they are guiltless be added, and for all these let them be held responsible." But if this were their true import we might well despair of their vindication, for of course *that* would be a prayer for the just Judge to perpetrate a rank injustice. It is hardly likely, however, that the Psalmists, whose constant cry is that God will defend the right, can have craved this wrong at his hands.

By some (Cook, &c.) it is suggested that the writer refers to the record of sins in God's book, and prays Him to add to those already committed those which they will commit hereafter. But I do not see that, even if we could adopt this exegesis, we should be much better off, for the prayer would still betray an unseemly, uncharitable eagerness for punishment. Still less can I accept the kindred explanation offered both by ancient and modern writers (Augustine Piscator, Hammond, Phillips), "Permit them to add iniquity unto their iniquity,"¹ for this meaning has been *forced* into the words, and then it is found to be a prayer for the perpetuation and increase of evil—of that which is abominable, and of all things most hateful to the Majesty of Heaven.

But, let us now remark, (1) the idea of addition is not in the Original. The word translated "add" (וַיִּשָּׂא) is, literally, "give," *i.e.* "put," "set" (as in verse 21). (2) The word rendered "iniquity" (פֶּשַׁע) means (see Gesenius, "Thesaurus," p. 1000), not only "sin" (ἀμαρτία, *pravitas*), but "guilt" (*culpa peccando contracta*). (3) It is not necessary to render it alike in

¹ "Addis, non vulnerando, sed non sanando."—Aug.

both instances. The fondness of the sacred writers for *paronomasia* is well known. We are quite justified therefore in translating the clause, as Kay does very happily, "O set the stamp of guilt upon their guilt."¹ And so, we find the Psalmist's prayer is, (very much as the margin interprets it) a prayer that the impieties and atrocities which have so long flourished unrepented, to the great distress of the faithful, may now be publicly reprobated by God, and receive the punishment they deserve.

And very similar is the meaning of the next clause: "Let them not come into thy righteousness." To the writer, whose view was limited to this life present, it seemed that their sins were such as the Lord ought not to pardon, and could not pardon (cf. 2 Kings xxiv. 4), without danger to morality and piety. To receive such men into favour, to account them as "righteous," would be to weaken the sanctions of religion and encourage men in crime. Morality needed their punishment. Justice cried aloud for their destruction. And, accordingly, the Psalmist concludes by praying for their destruction: "Let them be blotted out from the book of life, and with righteous men let them not be written" (verse 28). I observe with surprise that Professor Perowne describes this as "the most terrible imprecation of all." No doubt it is, if it means, as he maintains, "exclusion . . . from all hope of salvation." But *is* this its meaning? Was it the meaning of Moses when he prayed (Exod. xxxii. 32), "Blot me, I pray thee, out of thy

¹ Similarly Ewald: "Gib Schuld nach ihrer Schuld," though he understands the words differently. "*Gib Schuld, Strafe, nach ihrer Schuld*, so viel ihre Schuld verdient, Wort-und Gedankenspiel" is his note.

book." It is not denied that this is the import of similar phrases in the New Testament (Phil. iv. 3 ; Rev. iii. 5 ; xiii. 8, &c. ; cf. St. Luke x. 20), but it is impossible that Moses can have meant this. It is not in human nature thus to forswear eternal felicity. And what he did mean, and what the Psalmist meant, is not difficult to discover. The figure is borrowed, as Perowne allows, "from the civil lists, or register, in which the names of citizens were enrolled." But these lists were lists of living men ; when a name was blotted out, it was the name of one actually or civilly dead. And the list referred to in the Psalm is distinctly stated to be not a register of the saved (a subject about which the writer probably knew but little), but a "book of the *living*," of those "who not only live, but are deemed worthy to live." (Cook.) The prayer, consequently, is a prayer for their destruction, for the curtailment of their earthly life.

Nor does it seem to me to make against this view that in the second hemistich, the Psalmist adds : "And not be written with the righteous." For he may here, and probably he does, refer to a different register,—the book of the righteous, in which case the imprecation is the exact equivalent of the second clause of verse 27. But even if he identified the register of the righteous with the roll-call of the living, still there is nothing to indicate that he desired the exclusion of his enemies from eternal life,—from that life indeed which at that time had not been brought to light. (2 Tim. i. 10.)

I find nothing, therefore, in the imprecations of this Psalm to warrant the conclusion that the writer,

in defiance of the religion he professed, has "suffered his mouth to sin by wishing a curse" to his enemies' souls.

PSALM CXXXVII.

The comminations of this Psalm differ from those which have been already discussed, in this particular, that they are levelled, not against individuals, but against nations,—against Edom and Babylon. For this reason, however, their vindication will be all the less difficult. For,—

1. Nations, as such, *can* only be recompensed in this present life, inasmuch as national existence is limited to this present life. And, therefore, not only were the states and kingdoms of antiquity under the law of temporal retribution, but so also are the kingdoms of Christendom and of our own time. Still is the commonwealth scourged by the despot, the revolution, the reign of terror ; still, as the present generation has witnessed, are a nation's luxury and profligacy the sure precursors of that nation's degradation and defeat.

2. The sins of communities are more public and notorious than those of private individuals, and therefore call the more loudly for open and visible retribution.

3. The principle of strict *retaliation* is, perhaps, more necessary in the case of nations than of persons. And for this reason, that the finger of God cannot, as a rule, be so easily traced in national prosperity or national disaster as in the fortunes of the individual man.

4. Provision is made for the punishment, at least in part, of the sins of the individual by the powers

that be. But a nation's guilt can only be requited by the God of battles, by the Lord of the locust and the caterpillar and the palmerworm (Joel ii. 25). There was all the stronger reason therefore for calling upon Him to "judge among the nations."

And now let us consider what had been respectively the sins of Edom and Babylon. The charge against the former is that they, the kinsmen of Israel, had exulted in the woes of Jerusalem (Obad. 12, 13), that, in the sack of the city, they had clamoured for its complete destruction (Psa. cxxxvii. 7), that they had revelled and "drunk upon the holy mountain" (Obad. 16), that they had betrayed their brethren to death by intercepting the flight of the fugitives (*ibid.* 10, 11, 14; Ezek. xxxv. 5). Such was the false and cruel part they had played in the hour of Jerusalem's distress, and the Psalmist simply asks, in the name of justice and according to the voices of the prophets (Ezek. xxv. 13, 14; xxxv.; Lam. iv. 22; Jerem. xlix. 13, 17, 18, &c.), that it might be remembered and required.

It is needless to inquire particularly into the sins of Babylon. That they were great a glance at Jeremiah l., li., will shew. And it needs no record to tell us that, in the siege and carrying away of Jerusalem, great atrocities were committed by the conquerors. We may be quite sure that

"Many a childing mother then
And new-born baby died,"

for the wars of the old world were always attended by such barbarous cruelties.¹ The apostrophe of

¹ Cf. 2 Kings viii. 12; xv. 16; Isa. xiii. 16; Hosea x. 14; Nahum iii. 10. &c.

verses 8, 9, consequently merely proclaims the certainty of a just retribution—of the same retribution that the prophets had foretold (Isa. xiii. 16; xlvii.; Jerem. li.; cf. “who art to be destroyed,” verse 8),¹ and the happiness of those who should be its ministers; who should mete out to her what she had measured to the conquered Jew. It was the decree of Heaven that their “children” should “be dashed to pieces before their eyes.” The Psalmist simply recognizes the decree as just and salutary; he pronounces the terrible vengeance to have been deserved. To charge him with vindictiveness, therefore, is to impugn the justice and mercy of the Most High. And there is nothing to sustain the charge, for his words are simply a prediction, like that of the prophet. “As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head” (Obad. 15).

With the discussion—and I would hope vindication—of this Psalm my task is almost accomplished. For though expressions seemingly vindictive are found in other Psalms than those which we have had under review, yet there are none, it is believed, which are not on all fours with one or other of the verses which have come before us, or, at any rate, none of which, on the principles here laid down, we cannot

¹ Cf. also Hosea xiii. 16, where it is the judgment of God that the “infants” of Samaria should “be dashed in pieces.” שְׁחַדָּה, rendered “Who art to be destroyed” in the Authorized Version, is variously interpreted, as (1) active, “Thou destroyer” (ἡ ληστρίς, —Symmachus. *Du Verwüsterin*, —Ewald); as (2) passive, part. pres., “Thou that art destroyed” (*vastata*, —Jerome); and (3) as pass. part. fut. (*vastanda*), as above. If we adopt (1), the word affords a reason for the commination of verse 9; if (2), we see in it an intimation that retribution was already begun; if (3), a prediction that retribution was certain and imminent.

give a good account. Whether I have been too bold in my title; whether the "Vindictive Psalms" are thoroughly "vindicated" by the considerations which I have advanced, it is of course for others to judge. But I may perhaps be permitted to say that the argument appears to me to be irresistible. For if it be conceded, as it surely must be, that those who penned the imprecations knew little or nothing of a future state of rewards and punishments, or if it merely be granted—and this, at all events, cannot be denied—that they were taught to expect for "every transgression and disobedience" a "just recompense of reward" in this life, then every step of the reasoning follows almost as a matter of course till at last the conclusion is reached that the so-called "imprecations" are, in reality, impassioned entreaties for justice, for a necessary and salutary retribution. Viewed from this standpoint they lose their aspect of malevolence and are glorified with the consecration of equity and religion: they resolve themselves into prayers to the Theocratic Ruler of Israel to deal with the enemies of Israel and of Israel's king according to the just laws of the Theocracy.

But whether my readers agree with me in these general conclusions or not, and whatever construction they may put upon these "vindictive" passages, one point is, I take it, indisputable, viz., that so far from being out of harmony with the rest of the Old Testament, as Dr. Hessey maintains, and as is very generally believed, they are the natural and inevitable products of the dispensation under which the writers lived. The spirit which inspired them is, beyond all doubt, the same which breathed in the

utterances of the law and in the voices of the prophets. The prayers which they embody have their parallels and precedents in the pages of Jewish history. In fact, they are simply the echo of the legislation of Sinai ; they are thoroughly homogeneous with the revelation of which they form a part, and with that they must stand or fall.

And I see in this fact—that the imprecations are in perfect unison with the genius of the Legal Dispensation—a fresh solution of the difficulty, or rather a fresh contribution towards its solution. So far I have rested the defence of the “Vindictive Psalms” on the fact that the first dispensation was one of temporal rewards and punishments,—one that contained no revelation of a recompense hereafter. But it was not only in respect of the doctrine of a future life that it was inferior to the Christian verity ; it was also inferior in its moral tone and teaching. In all its conceptions of human duty, in its ideal of human charity and human piety alike, it occupied, naturally, a lower level than the religion which was designed to supersede it. And if this be so, is it to be wondered at if the Psalms partake of the inferiority of the inferior dispensation, from the soil of which they sprang?

And surely it is no disparagement of that earlier revelation to affirm that it was inferior—inferior in its ethics—to the beneficent religion of the Christ. I am well aware that such a view has been denounced as dishonouring to Moses. But to me it seems to be dishonouring to our Lord to dispute it. For is it conceivable that the Son of God should have come into our planet, that the Infinite Wisdom and the Infinite Love should have taber-

naced with men and not have shewn to men a more excellent way than they had trodden before? Is it, then, the case that "the Light of the world" has given the world no new light, not only as to the future life, but also as to the duties and charities of this life present? Has Christianity no higher standard, no nobler and lovelier ideal than Judaism had? *Credat Judaeus, at non Christianus.* For if this be so, then surely the "Teacher come from God" has come in vain; surely "the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father" has declared the Father's love to little purpose.

But it is to be remembered here that Christ has distinctly claimed for his teaching a superiority over that of Moses and the prophets. In the Sermon on the Mount, for example, He "sets forth his relation as Lawgiver to the law of Moses," and draws an elaborate contrast between the teachings of Christianity and Judaism. The keynote of that sermon is, "It hath been said to them of old time, . . . but I say unto you." And in respect of murder, of adultery, of swearing, of divorce, and the like, He shews how different, how much higher and more spiritual were the doctrines He taught. More than that, in the course of this same sermon He notices that essential principle of the Mosaic code, the *jus talionis*, and *virtually repeals it*. "It hath been said, 'An eye for an eye,' &c. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil," &c. Not only do we find, that is to say, on the testimony of its Founder, that the moral code of Christianity is in advance of that of Moses, but we find that the very law which lies at the root of the imprecations, and which, no doubt,

suggested many of them, gives place in the religion of the Son of God to milder and purer provisions.

Nor was this the only occasion on which the Lord proclaimed that the whole spirit and *ἡθος* of his religion was gentler and more gracious than that of the law and the prophets. The sons of Zebedee, after the example of the prophet Elijah, sought to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritans. But our Lord "rebuked them." He did not say, indeed, that it was wrong in Elijah to act as he did. He could not have asserted this without condemning the Power which ratified Elijah's prayer. And we have seen reason to believe¹ that that prayer is abundantly justified by the circumstances which provoked it. But He *did* teach that the prayer which was right in the prophet of a past age would nevertheless be wrong in the apostles of the new faith, and wrong because they were of a different spirit, the children of a more merciful dispensation, a dispensation the object of which is not "to destroy men's lives, but to save them."²

"To *destroy* men's lives"—"to *save* them"—have we not in these few words, whether they were spoken by Christ or not, two characteristic features, and therefore one of the cardinal differences of the two dispensations? The first, as we have seen, dealt with the sinner by summarily destroying him; the

¹ See THE EXPOSITOR, vol. iii. pp. 460-463.

² The argument is not affected materially if we allow (which I should be slow to do) that the words of the Received Text, *ὥς καὶ Ἠλίας ἐποίησεν* and *καὶ ἔειπεν, Οὐκ οἶδατε. κ.τ.λ.* are interpolations. For it is clear that the two disciples had the example of Elijah in their mind as they spoke, and the mere *rebuke* proves that what was lawful for him would notwithstanding be wrong in them.

second seeks to reclaim him. The first rigorously recompensed evil for evil: that is to say, it visited moral evil, which is sin, with physical evil, which is pain and death; the second overcomes evil with good. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that destruction is a prominent feature, a watchword almost, of the Old Testament. How many of its records, how many of its miracles, are simply records and miracles of death? The antediluvians were destroyed; the cities of the plain were destroyed; the Egyptians, Canaanites, Amalekites, Assyrians, were all destroyed. The plagues of Egypt, again, the miracles of the desert, and the wonders wrought by the prophets, constantly involved the destruction of men's lives. But we turn to the New Testament and we feel at once that we breathe a different atmosphere. "Grace and truth" have come "by Jesus Christ." The thunders and lightnings of Sinai are heard no longer, but there is seen the descending dove. Now the miracles are miracles of healing and mercy. Now the lives and souls of men are treated as unspeakably precious. The Son of Man judges no man, condemns no man; his mission is to save.

And hence we see more clearly, not perhaps why the imprecations which have been discussed were lawful on Hebrew lips, but certainly why they still sound harshly to Christian ears. It is because since they were spoken the standard of duty has been raised. It is because the Son of Mary has taught men something of the unutterable love and tenderness and patience of the Most High; it is because we have before our eyes the beautiful

vision of the meek and gentle and silently suffering Christ. "The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding." The imprecations are alien, perhaps even repugnant, to our Christian ideas, because they are Christian, because

"through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns."

It must not be supposed, however, that because Christianity teaches a *more* excellent way, the way of the Psalmists was not excellent in its time and place. Each dispensation is the offspring of the Deity; each was designed to further his purposes of grace; each aimed at the ultimate regeneration of humanity. But they were framed for, and were adapted to, different periods of the world's history. The first was for the childhood of our race, the second for its manhood. The Law was not the Teacher, not the Saviour, but it was the slave, the *παῖδάγωγός*, who should take man by the hand and lead him to Christ. And the office of the slave, though incomparably below that of the preceptor, was nevertheless necessary and salutary. The stern, repressive discipline which would *gêne* our manhood may be requisite for the hot blood of youth. The Law was a lower step, it is true; but, all the same, it was a step by which humanity might rise to the economy of reconciliation and to the vision of God in Christ. And its imprecations, if they served no other purpose, must have emphasized "the sinfulness of sin;" and thus they may have been so many "voices crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'"

JOSEPH HAMMOND.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

II.—THE CURSE. (*Chapter iii.*)

THIS Chapter divides itself into three sections, three strophes, in which human life is execrated through its whole course. (1) Job asks (verses 3–10), since life is so heavy a burden, Why was I born at all? (2) Then he demands (verses 11–19), if I must be born, why was I not suffered to die as soon as I was born, and sink into the rest and quietness of death? (3) And, finally, if that were too great a boon, why may I not die *now*—now that I am sick of life and long for the tomb? (Verses 20–26.)

CHAPTER III.—*At length Job opened his mouth, and cursed his day. 2. And Job answered and said:*

3. *Perish the day wherein I was born,
And the night that said, A man is conceived!*
4. *That day! Let it be darkness!
Let not God ask after it from above,
Neither let the sun shine upon it!*
5. *Let darkness and the blackness of death reclaim it!
Let clouds dwell upon it!
Let the terrors of the day affright it!*
6. *That night! May thick darkness seize it!
Let it not rejoice among the days of the year,
Nor come into the number of the months!*
7. *Lo, that night! Let it be barren,
And let no cry of joy enter it!*
8. *Let those who ban days ban it,
Who are of skill to rouse the Dragon!*

9. *May the stars of its twilight gather darkness !
 Let it long for light and see none,
 Nor let it behold the eyelids of the dawn,*
10. *Because it shut not up the doors of the womb that bore me,
 And hid not trouble from mine eyes !*
11. *Why did I not die from the womb—
 Come forth from the belly to expire ?*
12. *Why did knees welcome me,
 And why breasts that I might suck ?*
13. *For then should I have been lying still and quiet ;
 I had slumbered, and been at rest*
14. *With kings and councillors of the earth
 Who built for themselves desolate sepulchres,*
15. *And with princes, possessed of gold,
 Who filled their palaces with silver :*
16. *Or, like a hidden abortion, I had not been,
 Like babes who never see the light.*
17. *There the troublers cease from troubling,
 And there the strong, worn out, find rest :*
18. *There the prisoners repose together in peace,
 They hear no taskmaster's voice :*
19. *The small and the great are equal there,
 And the slave is free from his lord.*
20. *Wherefore is light given to the afflicted,
 And life to the bitter in spirit,*
21. *Who long for death, but it cometh not,
 And search for it more than for hid treasure,*
22. *Who would rejoice with gladness
 And be blithe to find a grave,—*
23. *To a man whose path is hidden,
 And whom God hath fenced in ?*
24. *For my groaning cometh like my food,
 And my sighs gush out like the waters.*
25. *If I fear a fear, it cometh upon me,
 And whatsoever I dread befalleth me.*
26. *I have no quiet, no repose, no rest,
 But trouble cometh on trouble.*

The three sections of this Chapter are introduced by a few historical or descriptive words (verses 1

and 2). Job "*opened his mouth*"—a phrase only used on solemn occasions, and denoting the momentous character of the utterances which followed it ; as, for example, when the Lord Jesus "*opened his mouth*" to deliver the Sermon on the Mount (St. Matt. v. 2). —"*And cursed his day.*" The word here used is not the dubious *bârêk* employed in Chapters i. and ii. which, besides intermediate shades of intention, might mean either to bless or to curse ; but another verb, which signifies to *execrate* that which is base and worthless. His "*day*" is, of course, the day of his birth. "*And Job answered and said,*"—answered whom, or what ? If the three Friends had as yet spoken no word to him, their manner and gestures had, nevertheless, said so much that he is sure they

"Cannot but feel this wrong as 'twere their own."

They had wept, rent their mantles, cast dust on their heads, sat down with him seven days and nights, thus mutely intimating their grief and compassion. Job's words are his response, his answer, to this unspoken sympathy. Beholding their sorrow and amazement at the mere spectacle of his misery, the sense of his misery comes closer home to him ; it gathers new force as he sees it reflected from their eyes : and he breaks out into passionate imprecations on his day.

The First Strophe, like that which follows it, touches points on which it is difficult, almost impossible, to dilate without some offence against modesty. And, therefore, I will only give a brief summary of its contents, and a few explanatory notes.

First of all Job execrates, in general terms, the

night of his conception and the day of his birth (verse 3). Then, more particularly (verses 4 and 5), he prays that the *day* of his birth may be ever dark as night, forgotten by God, unilluminated by the sun, reclaimed by death as its proper possession, lost in clouds, exposed to all the terrors incident and possible to day. Then, with equal ingenuity and precision, he curses the *night* of his conception (verses 6-9). May the primal darkness seize upon it and swallow it up, so that it shall be blotted from the calendar and cease to find a place in the glad procession of the year! may it be barren, giving life to nothing, hearing no cry of joy because a child is born in it! may it be accursed, so that, "ever trembling on the verge of dawn," the dawn may never break upon it! And, finally, in verse 10, he gives us the sole reason for this tremendous imprecation on it, that it was the night on which *he* entered on this life of misery and shame.

Verse 4.—"Let not God *ask after* it,"—*i.e.* not so much as miss it when it is gone; let it be *forgotten*, and not only extinct.

Verse 5.—Darkness and black Death are the nearest of kin to that most dark and miserable day. Let them *reclaim* it, then, as, according to Arab and Hebrew law, kinsmen might redeem the inheritance which had fallen into the hands of a stranger. It was a portion of the kingdom of death which had gone astray into the light; let it be recovered, recaptured, and compelled to submit once more to the sway of "chaos and old night." (Professor Davidson, *in loco*.) "Let the *terrors of the day* affright it;" literally, the terrors of a day, of *any* day, all the terrors incident or possible to day-time. Probably

the main reference is to eclipses, which were supremely terrible to the ancient world.

Verse 6.—The robber Darkness—for here the figure changes—is to *seize* “that night” as its booty, that it may no longer rejoice amid the days of the year. In the Poet’s imagination the night does not so much *rejoice* “on account of its own beauty, as to form one of the joyous and triumphant choral troop of nights that come in in harmonious and glittering procession.” (Professor Davidson, *in loco*.) From that happy company this night is to be expelled.

Verse 8.—“Those who *ban* days” are those who were held to make days unlucky, *dies infausti*. There is a quaint legend which says that at daybreak the Ethiopians curse the sun, because it has burned them so black. And some commentators, misled by this impossible legend, have suggested that the Ethiopians are the banners of days here adjured. Obviously, as the second line of the verse shews, the allusion is to the ancient Oriental superstition which attached a supra-natural power to the incantations of the sorcerer. It was *he* who was able, in the popular belief, both to ban days and to “*rouse the Dragon*,” *i.e.* the heavenly but hostile constellation known to antiquity by that name.

The ancient poets feigned the constellations to have life and personality, and to be variously related to each other. The fantasy of the poet became the superstition of the vulgar, and drew many legends round it. It was thought, for example, that there was a special art, a magical art, of exciting the Dragon, then held to be the enemy of light, to devour the sun and moon, and so for a time at least

to pour darkness over the earth. Eclipses were his work, or the work of the magicians who controlled him by their enchantments. The Chinese still hold the superstition of the antique world, and, as an eclipse approaches, seek by wild outcries and the noise of gongs to scare away the Dragon—not with much effect, for all that I could ever hear. Similar superstitions obtain throughout the East to this day, as they did, indeed, throughout the West till a few years ago. Some traces of the belief in good and ill luck, and of the influence of the stars in their courses on the events of the earth, may even yet be detected in our language and habits, and that not only among the rustic and ignorant, but even among men of culture and refinement.

Nor is the almost universal spread of such superstitions to be attributed solely to the vivid imagination of the poets, or to the mere influence of habit and tradition. They have their origin in some of the commonest facts of experience and in some of the profoundest emotions of the heart. Every man is aware, for instance, that on certain days he rises with a temperament wholly in tune with itself and his outward conditions ; “ his bosom’s lord sits lightly on its throne ; ” he is vigorous, bold, sanguine, he knows not why ; and on such days as these all seems to go well with him : while on other days, and from causes equally recondite, he rises “ deject and wretched,” feels beforehand that nothing will prosper with him, and often finds his foreboding miserably fulfilled. Is it any wonder that on these common facts of experience some men, most men even, have built up a superstition of lucky days and unlucky ?

Then, too, we are constantly compelled to feel that both in the human and in the natural worlds great forces are at work which we are powerless to withstand ; and that if, at times, we are carried by them where we would be, at other times we are carried whither we would not. These forces, which the ancient world impersonated and clothed in divine forms, enter into and control our life in a thousand ways which we can neither foresee nor regulate. Is it wonderful, then, that men, feeling their dependence on them, have sought to master and control them, and have even persuaded themselves that they *had* acquired a secret and mysterious power over them, so that they could not only read oracles, but affect the course of Nature and give men good fortune or ill ?

Science, moreover, has discovered that the same great forces and laws " run " throughout the physical universe, that the heavenly bodies do therefore exert a vast and manifold influence on the earth. Is it not natural, then, that those who are not content with materialistic theories of the universe, should assume that as force implies will, or spirit, so forces may imply spirits ; that they should people the whole universe with invisible agents and ministers of God, and infer that the powers and principalities of the unseen universe may be touched by the cries of human infirmity and need, and, like the physical forces of Nature, may be rendered adverse or propitious by the attitude we take up toward them ?

It is to such facts and arguments as these that we must attribute the power of astrological superstition in the modern as in the ancient world ; and when we take them into the reckoning, no wise man will confi-

dently or hastily pronounce that there is absolutely no truth in, or behind, them. In the forms they have commonly assumed they are doubtless untrue and injurious : for, after all, and whatever the powers or forces at work upon him, a man's fate depends on himself and on the attitude he takes towards God, and any belief which lessens the sense of his personal responsibility, or emasculates his will, injures and degrades him. Shakespeare, whose works teem with allusions to the astrological dogmas and mysteries current in his day, saw and rebuked their immorality. In " King Lear " he writes : " This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune—*often the surfeit of our own behaviour*—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars : as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and traitors by spherical predominance ; drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence ; and all that we are evil in by a divine thrusting on." In the form these superstitions assumed in the age of Job, they were assuredly very questionable, to say the least of them. That by his incantations a man can affect the course of Nature and Providence, and bring good or evil fortune to his neighbours, is an incredible and degrading superstition ; but that a man may modify the action of natural forces by a scientific knowledge and use of them, every man will admit ; while that by prayer and obedience we may influence the God who holds the universe in the hollow of his hand, and the ministers of God who execute his will, no Christian can well deny.

That Job heartily believed in the superstition of his day, and thought that men could ban and unban days, rouse and allay the Dragon, is probable enough. That men like Balaam, and the magicians of Egypt, had a real power over the forces of nature and the minds of men, is not altogether improbable. But it does not follow because the Poet who has delineated Job used astrological terms and figures that he necessarily accredited the astrological superstition, any more than it follows that Shakespeare believed in it because he is for ever making one or other of his *dramatis personæ* exclaim,—

“ It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions,”

any more than it follows that we ourselves accept it when we speak of lucky or unlucky days, adverse or propitious influences : or, indeed, any more than, in verse 9, he meant to affirm that the dawn had eyes of flesh, covered with lids of flesh, when he penned the beautiful phrase “ eyelids of the dawn.”

This phrase is as natural as it is beautiful. “ The long streaming rays of morning light that come from the opening clouds which reveal the sun,” have seemed to many imaginative minds like the light of the eyes of day pouring through its opening lids and lashes when it rouses itself from slumber. Thus Sophocles (*Antiq.* 103) speaks of “ the eyelid of the golden day,” and from him probably Milton derived the exquisite phrase in his “ *Lycidas*,”—“ Under the opening eyelids of the morn.” The figure is so familiar to the Arabs that their poets use the word “ eye ” as a synonym of “ sun,” and describe the flashing of the sun’s rays as “ the twinkling of the eye.”

Verse 10.—"The womb that bore me" is literally "*my womb*," *i.e.* the womb in which I was conceived. Similarly Juvenal (Sat. vi. 124), "*Ostenditque tuum, generose Brittanice ventrem.*"

In the Second Strophe (verses 11-19) Job bewails his misery in not having died as soon as he was born:—demanding, first, why he was cared for and saved from the merciful hands of death (verses 11, 12), running over all the chances he had had of escaping the burden of life, and lamenting the mistaken kindness which closed them all against him: and, then (verses 13-19), permitting himself the relief of dwelling on the happy quiet and repose he would have enjoyed had death been granted him. As he pictures to himself the tranquil repose of the dead, his words grow more calm, and subdued and tender; we feel that the man is in love with death, and craves it as the sole good left to him. What, above all, attracts him in it is its restfulness: "There the troublers cease from troubling, the weary find rest; even the prisoner no longer hears the taskmaster's voice, and the slave is at last free from his lord." Exhausted by the excitements of loss, and grief, and never-ending speculations on an inscrutable mystery, he yearns for repose; and, moreover, *he* has a lord, a taskmaster, though he will not name Him, who holds him in hard bondage.

Verse 12.—The "knees" are those of the father, on whose knees the new-born infant was laid, that he might acknowledge it for his own.

Verse 14.—"Desolate sepulchres," literally, "desolations," are in all probability rock-tombs, mausoleums,

or even pyramids, which, no doubt, Job had seen in his travels. The Poet shews, and assumes in his hero, an intimate acquaintance with Egypt, such as, indeed, many both of the patriarchs and of the "men of Solomon" must have possessed.

Of *Verse 15* the sense is dubious. Two interpretations have found acceptance. (1) Some understand by the "houses" which the princes, possessed of gold, filled with silver, the graves, or "sepulchres," of the previous verse; and these quote the innumerable instances in which treasures—coins, jewels, ancient works of art wrought in the nobler metals—have been discovered in ancient tombs. (2) Others, and with these I hold, maintain that there is no need of such a forced interpretation of the words; that what Job intends to convey is simply the enormous luxury in which these princes lived before they saw corruption, and his conviction that in the rest of the grave even they were better off than when they revelled in their sumptuous palaces.

Verse 17.—The word I have rendered "the troublers" means "the wicked," no doubt, but it is the wicked viewed as *unquiet*, restless, troubled and troubling. "There lies in the word," says Professor Davidson, "the signature of eternal unrest, like the sea,—a divine comparison (Isa. lvii. 20),—with a continual wild moan and toss about it, in a fever even when asleep, not always openly destructive, but possessing infinite capacities for tumult and destruction."

In the Third Strophe all his former excitement rushes back on Job, and he breaks out once more

into passionate and wild reproach as he feels that even the rest of death is denied him, that the burden of life must still be borne. "Why may I not die *now*?" is the cry of his heart:

"Is wretchedness denied that benefit,
To end itself by death?"

He will not name God even yet, but, none the less, it is God whom he reproaches. Here, as often elsewhere in the Poem, he substitutes the "euphemistic *He*" for the Divine Name; but, nevertheless, it is God whom he accuses of surfeiting him with a life of which he is sick, of thrusting it upon him when all he longs for is to be rid of it. At first, his tone is more general (verse 20): "Why does *He* give light to the afflicted, and life to the bitter in spirit?" But it soon grows more personal; for he himself is "the man whose way is hidden" (verse 23), who is so bewildered and shut in on every side that he can but take a step or two in any direction before he is brought to a pause. And, at last (verses 24-26), his tone becomes wholly personal, and he describes his misery in the plainest, simplest, most pathetic words.

Verse 22.—The afflicted, who long for death, would be "blithe to find *a grave*,"—*any* grave: "these men are not particular; any grave will fit, provided they can but get into it." (Professor Davidson, *in loco*.)

Verse 23.—In the words "whose path is hidden" Job touches the very acme of his misery. That which most appals him is that, to his tear-filled eyes, human life, his own life, is "all a muddle;" that he can see no design in it, no aim, no clear and noble

intention; that he has for ever to pace the same weary round of speculation, and can find no exit from it: that, whatever the path of inquiry or action on which he sets out, before he has taken more than a few steps he finds a fence across it which he can neither climb nor pass. What is his life worth to him when he can no longer see any worthy end toward which, oppressed with miseries, he may strive, when God has so shut him in on every side that he can find no loophole of escape?

With *Verse 24* we may compare Psalm xlii. 3,—“My tears have been my meat day and night.” The two features of Job’s grief indicated in this verse appear to be—(1) its constancy; it is regular as daily bread: and (2) its extent; it is like water, like a broad deep stream. The Vulgate, however, has some authority for its reading or rendering,—“*antequam comedam suspiro.*”

Verse 25.—Gloomy and terrifying apprehensions are one of the most painful symptoms of *elephantiasis*. And Job here asserts that whatever presentiment of evil it bred in him was straightway realized.

Looking back on the Chapter as a whole, we can hardly fail to be struck with the ingenuity with which the changes are rung on its main theme. So ingenious, indeed, does Job shew himself in enumerating the details of his misery and in imprecating curses upon them, that, at first, we are tempted to think his strain unnatural, artificial. But even a little thought and reading, if we cannot fall back on experience, will convince us that the picture is true to life. Every

loving heart is thus ingenious in setting forth the grief occasioned by sorrows which touch it home. It takes a strange, and sometimes a fierce, delight in calling up all circumstances that deepen its sense of loss and swell the current of passionate emotion, in refusing all alleviations, in repelling all hope of relief, in converting any consolations which may be offered it into food for new regrets and a deeper despair. All literature is full, and notably the Greek tragedies, not only of sentiments akin to those of Job, but of equally ingenious and elaborate iterations of them and variations upon them. Sophocles, for example, states in the briefest sharpest form the ruling thoughts of the two first strophes in Job's "curse," and in stating them he does but express a very general sentiment of the ancient Heathen world : *"Not to be born is best in every way ; once born, by far the better lot is then at once to go back whence we came"* (Æd. Col. 1225.) For similar expansions and elaborations in the expression of grief, for this long harping on one sad string, we need not go beyond Shakespeare, who, indeed, in more than one of his finest passages, seems to have had this Chapter in his eye. Thus, for instance, in "King John," when Philip announces his pact of peace with England, and declares,—

" The yearly course that brings this day about
Shall never see it but a holiday,"

Constance replies :

" A wicked day, and not a holy day !
What hath this day deserved ? what hath it done,
That it in golden letters should be set
Among the high tides in the calendar ?

Nay, rather *turn this day out of the week*,
 This day of shame, oppression, perjury.
 Or, if it must stand still, *let wives with child*
Pray that their burthens may not fall this day,
 Lest that their hopes prodigiously be crossed :
 But ' on this day let seamen fear no wreck ;
 No bargains break that are not this day made,
This day, all things come to an ill end,
 Yea, faith itself to hollow falsehood change ! ”

The passage is full of echoes from the Curse of Job ; and the line, “ Nay, rather turn this day out of the week,” is but a paraphrase of the verse, “ Let it not rejoice among the days of the year, nor come into the number of the months.”

So, again, when bereft of Arthur, “ her fair son,” and urged to patience by the King, who had betrayed her, Constance breaks out into an invocation of death no less elaborate, though it is much more gross than that of Job, and plays with the images suggested by her excited fancy in the same lingering detail ;—an invocation, moreover, which can hardly fail to remind us of Job’s description of himself as longing for death, and searching for it more than for hid treasure, as one who would be blithe and exceeding glad to find a grave,—

“ O amiable lovely death !
 Arise forth from the couch of lasting night,
 Thou hate and terror of prosperity,
 And I will kiss thy detestable bones,
 And put my eyeballs in thy vaulty brows,
 And ring these fingers with thy household worms,
 And stop this gap of breath with fulsome dust,
 And be a carrion monster like thyself :
 Come, grin on me, and I will think thou smilest,
 And buss thee as thy wife. Misery’s love,
 O come to me ! ”

1 “ *But*,” i.e. “ save,” or “ except.”

Of the moral attitude assumed by Job when, at last, he gives his sorrow words, we need only observe that, though he neither lets go his integrity nor renounces God, he is not quite the man who said, "Shall we accept the good from God, and shall we not accept the evil?" He does not as yet charge God foolishly, indeed; he still retains so much reverence that he will not even name God, except once, and that passingly. But he indulges in more than one impatient fling at the God whom he will not openly accuse. He feels that it is God who has condemned him to live when he longs to die, that it is He who has so fenced him in that he cannot stir, cannot even see a path out of his miseries and perplexities. Already, and before the provocations of his Friends drive him so to assert his own righteousness as to impugn the justice of God, we can see that his patience is beginning to give way, that his woe is heavier than he can bear.

S. COX.

A GREAT PROMISE.

ST. MATTHEW XIX. 27-29, AND ST. MARK X. 30.

I.—THE HUNDRED-FOLD.

ST. PETER'S question was a vulgar and a selfish question, yet it received a very generous reply. Mere pity for the young Ruler who was sorrowfully leaving Christ ought to have kept him from asking it, or mere sympathy with his Master, who was at least as sorry to see the Ruler go as the Ruler was to leave Him, and to leave Him *so*. But for the moment Peter was occupied with himself and his few intimate companions; he had no thought, no

care, for the thousands who could not resolve to leave all they had for Christ's sake and the gospel's, and still less thought or care for the world at large. For the moment his spirit was at least as alien from that of his Master as was the spirit of the young Ruler himself. Nevertheless the Lord Jesus shews the most delicate consideration for his selfish pre-occupation. He asks for reward! Well, he shall have a reward, and a reward far greater than any of which he has dreamed. Hereafter, he and his brethren shall be kings under the King; when the Son of Man sits in the throne of his glory, they shall sit on twelve thrones and rule the twelve tribes of Israel.

But if they—and I suppose that, as usual, St. Peter was only the spokesman of the rest—can think only of themselves, Christ cannot think only of them. He gives them the promise they longed to hear; but, having given it, He forthwith generalizes it. Not they alone, but *every one* who leaves anything for Christ's sake shall receive a hundred-fold—"now in this present time," as St. Mark adds—and shall inherit eternal life.

Now this great generalized promise has perplexed many thoughtful and devout minds, the minds of many who do not doubt that Christ will be as good as his word. They can trust Him for their future reward, and leave themselves in his hands without misgiving or fear. They are conscious that they already inherit the spiritual and eternal life He promised to confer; and they can readily conceive that, in the world to come, this life, freed from the hindrances and restraints of their "mortal part," will

unfold energies and graces which cannot bud and blossom in this world's unkindly weather. But they do not see that any earthly possessions, or ties, or pleasures, which they have abandoned for his sake, are restored to them on earth, now, in this present time ; and not only restored, but multiplied a hundred-fold. It will be time well spent, therefore, if we meditate on this great promise until its hidden meaning grows plain and clear.

Its general intention or principle seems to be, that Christ will be no man's debtor ; that it is always gain to lose what we leave for Him ; that whatever we give to Him becomes more truly and intimately our own ; that whatever we lay up with Him will be returned again with usury ; that in his recompenses Christ uses large measures, "pressed down, shaken together, and yet running over."

This is Christ's general law of recompense, a law here stated in the paradoxical form commonly used not by Jesus only, but also by all the great Jewish teachers of his time. But in seeking to define and vindicate it, we must remember, first, that, though at times men may have to leave houses and lands, and even to sacrifice kinships both of blood and affection, in order that they may be true to Christ, at other times, at most times even, we can only be true to Him by using our possessions wisely and for the good of our fellows, and by our fidelity to the kinships in which we are placed and the attachments we have formed. No man serves Christ by simply renouncing all that he has, or by breaking loose from any tie of blood or friendship. Then only do we serve Him by forsaking our natural ties, or our

acquired possessions, when they come between us and Him, when we must renounce either Him or them. Throughout the Gospels He claims to stand first with us; and He advances this claim because only as we love Him supremely can we love our neighbours as we should or use our possessions so as to get from them the full benefit they are capable of yielding us. In short, what his demand on us really comes to is, that our spiritual interests and affections should engage our chief attention; and that where it is necessary, and *only* where it is necessary, our temporal interests and our natural affections should be sacrificed or subordinated to them.

We must observe, also, that in this great promise our Lord calls away our thoughts from that which is outward to that which is inward, from that which we *have* to that which we *are*; and intimates that our true property, or wealth, consists not in any of the possessions from which we must soon part, but in the powers and gifts of that life which neither change nor death can touch. The Apostles were thinking of houses and lands, parents and children, thrones and principedoms; Christ speaks to them of life, the life eternal, as their true inheritance; the life which, when once it has been quickened, can never die; the life which, as it unfolds its energies and graces, makes us ever more fully "partakers of God," and even of that sway over all that is in the world which is the prerogative of God. It is as though He had warned them: A man's wealth does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesseth, but in the power of an endless

life, in the vigour and variety of its energies and capacities, in his ability to get the real good of all that is around him, even though it be not, in the legal sense, his own. Once let him rise into a spiritual life, a divine life, and all things become his, since he can make them all—even loss and pain, change and death—contribute to his welfare and swell the volume of his life.

We must observe, again—what the Disciples, who were accustomed to his parabolic and paradoxical style, would instantly discern—that the promise of our Lord, while it has a very real and literal sense, has also a figurative and spiritual sense. Some of the relationships here mentioned, for example, cannot be literally multiplied a hundred-fold; others of them could hardly be thus multiplied without becoming a curse to us instead of a blessing. One cannot have a hundred fathers or mothers; and surely no sane man would wish to have a hundred children or a hundred wives.

What, then, is the meaning of the Promise, that which gathers into itself all its various senses and aspects, and reconciles them? Perhaps it may be summed up and expressed under these three heads: (1) That in Christ, in his love and service, we find all that makes our kinships and possessions of real worth to us; (2) That in Him we find corresponding, yet superior, possessions and relationships to those which we resign, or may have to resign, for his sake; (3) That in virtue of our oneness with Him we possess all things and persons in a deeper truer way.

1. *We find in Christ, in loving and serving Him, all that makes our natural kinships and our possessions*

of real worth to us. What are our possessions—as houses and lands, and our kinships—as the ties which bind us to father and mother, wife and child, good for? what is it that gives them their value? for what ultimate end were they conferred on us? If we consider that question, whether from the Christian or the philosophical point of view, I think our conclusion must be: that our kinships and possessions are valuable to us, and reach their true end, only as they minister to our welfare and culture, as they develop our various faculties and powers, as they furnish us with opportunities of serving our fellows, and both enable and incline us to avail ourselves of them. God has grouped us in families and bound us to each other by many sacred and tender ties in order that we may love and help each other, and that, by loving and serving each other, we may develop and train, in ourselves and in those around us, the virtues and affections by which both we and they are raised in the scale of being and are led on to the highest perfection of which our nature is capable. Out of the great common patrimony which He has bestowed on the race at large, He secludes a little for each one of us, makes it in a special sense our own, in order that we may learn to use and administer it—use it, not for our own ends alone, but for the general welfare. To have much, or many things, is not in itself an advantage; it may be a grave disadvantage: it is a grave disadvantage if we neither possess nor develop the power to use them wisely, so to use them that we become wiser and better men and help to make other men wiser and better. To have many kinsfolk and friends will not

help us towards the true end of our being unless we can so occupy the kindly relations in which we stand as to do good by them and to get good from them. No man is the better, or even the better off, for simply having a large account with his bankers, or for owning a large estate ; if he spend his money or manage his estate foolishly, if he uses what he has mainly for base and sensual purposes, he does but shew that he is incapable of using it aright, that it has got into the wrong hands, hands too, from which it will soon slip, leaving him the poorer and the worse for his temporary possession of it. And, in like manner, no man is the better or the happier simply for having a large circle of relatives and friends. If either he, or they, fail to cultivate these kinships for high and noble ends, if they employ the influence which kinship gives to degrade each other, to encourage one another in maintaining a low and selfish tone, they may very easily be the worse and the poorer for the very affinities which ought to have contributed to their well-being.

Now suppose any man to have come clearly and honestly to the conclusion that he can only be true to Christ and his own soul by parting with something which he possesses, and in which the world tells him that his wealth consists ; or suppose he finds—as he may very well do even in times when there is no persecution for conscience' sake—that he must break with some kinsman, or give up a former friend : put the case that he must sacrifice his wealth, or some considerable portion of it, or that he must conquer an attachment which is injurious to his moral and spiritual welfare : will he really lose anything by

making this sacrifice for Christ's sake and the gospel's? will he not rather gain by it? Goods were given for his good; if he is the better man, the more capable and serviceable, the more virtuous and noble and devout for sacrificing his goods, or some of them, he gains by sacrificing them the very ends for which they were bestowed on him, and is the richer for his loss. He has added to the power and value and quality of his life; and his "life" is the only thing that death will leave him. In like manner, if a man has to conquer an attachment which is weakening and degrading him, he may lose a friend and all the comfort or pleasure he might have received from and through him; but for what were friends and relatives given save that he and they should minister to each other's well-being? If his welfare can be secured only by losing a friend, is not the loss a gain? And may not the loss be gain even to the friend he renounces when that friend discovers the motive of the renunciation? The Twelve gave up home and livelihood, father and mother, wife and children; that is, they gave up the use and comfort of them for a time; but did not they gain immensely by the sacrifice, and gain in those very ends of moral and spiritual culture to promote which kinships and possessions are conferred on men? Verily, they had their hundred-fold, and that now, in this present time.

2. *We find in Christ corresponding, yet superior, relationships and possessions to those which we resign for his sake.* Houses and lands, kinsfolk and friends, are intended for our culture in virtue and righteousness and charity; they are also the express

types of higher kinships which are open to us, and of a more enduring riches. From the father of our flesh we derive our first and best conception of the Father of our spirits. The love of woman helps us to apprehend and trust the love of Christ. The obedience and simplicity of childhood speak to us of the wiser simplicity and nobler obedience of discipleship. The corruptible treasure on earth symbolizes, in many ways, the immortal treasure in heaven. And if we leave, or lose, any of these typical relationships and possessions for Christ's sake, we gain that which they typify—a house not made with hands, the treasure which moth cannot corrupt, the family in heaven and in earth, the Father of an infinite majesty, the Friend who is our Brother and who sticketh closer than a brother. Do we lose by such an exchange as this, or gain—gain infinitely? It is not often that men are called to forsake all they have and all they love in order to follow Christ. Commonly the more difficult duty is imposed upon us of using all for our own good and for the good of our fellows. But even those who have been constrained to leave home and country, father and mother, wife and child, have in very deed received the hundred-fold now in this present time if they have become free-men of the eternal city, and could call the house of many mansions their own, if they have found a tender and loving Father in the God whom they once feared, and a redeeming Brother in the Lord who was once rejected and despised of men.

3. *In virtue of our oneness with Christ we possess all things and persons in a deeper, truer way.* It is not only that when we suffer and lose for Christ's

sake—*i.e.* in order that we may be true to the principles He taught and incarnated—we gain a title to the great inheritance ; but that in very deed all things become ours, and the power, as well as the right, to appropriate them all.

For, strictly speaking, a man's property is exactly what he can appropriate ; *that*, and not a jot more. If, for example, a man buys a parcel of ground, fences it in, builds a mansion on it, lays out a garden, plants a park, no doubt it is his in the full legal sense ; and yet no law, no title conferred by law, can make it really his. It may be mine far more truly than his. If when I go over his mansion and gaze on the works of art that adorn it, or walk through his grounds and study their exquisite complexities of form and colour, light and shade, I see in them innumerable beauties which, for lack of brain or lack of culture, he cannot discern in them ; if they teach me lessons he cannot learn, and quicken in me deep and pure emotions to which he is insensible, they are mine in a far higher sense than that in which they are his ; and they are mine, rather than his, simply because I can appropriate more of that which is in them, and of that which is highest and best in them. In me they have subserved a noble use ; they have kindled my imagination, cultivated my intellect, touched and purified my heart. A thousand accidents may destroy his legal possession of them—a fire, a bankruptcy, a death ; but no accident, not even death itself, can disturb my possession of them ; they have entered into my life, shaped my nature, become a part of my very being. And so, “a thing of beauty is a joy for ever” to as many as can study and appreciate it.

But if a neighbour should follow in my steps, if he too should look out over the fair demesne and let its beauties sink into his soul; and if, besides my merely æsthetic enjoyment of them, he can lift an unpretentious eye to heaven, and say, "*My Father made them all*;" if he feels that the varied loveliness of stream and sky, of cloud and sunshine, of tree and flower has been given by God in order that he and his fellows may enjoy and profit by them; if he permits them to quicken new faith, love, hope, peace in his soul—they are even more fully his than they are mine: for he has got a still deeper and more enduring good out of them; he has compelled them to minister to his highest welfare. They are *his* in a sense in which they can belong to none but those who are like-minded with himself, and whose spirits are as readily touched to fine issues.

Take another illustration of this important but too-much-forgotten truth. Here, say, is a picture by one of our great masters: it has for subject a noble landscape, or a fine historic incident. And here are two men variously related to it. One, very rich but very dull and ignorant, gives a few thousand pounds for it, hangs it on his wall, and hardly looks at it again except when he leads an acquaintance up to it and brags, "That is a Turner, or a Brett, or a Millais." The other—rich or poor does not matter—has only seen it half a dozen times; but he has set himself down before it and studied it. He is familiar with the story it tells, and it is full of pleasant and instructive associations to him, reminding him of some great passage in the annals of a people, and of the various modes in which it

has been handled by historians, artists, poets. Or he has travelled through the scene it depicts, and recognizes its very details. And still it is crowded with pleasant or instructive associations for him. Not only can he see more in it than a stranger to the scene, because he knows exactly what to look for and where to look for it; but he recalls the adventures which befell him when he traversed the scene, the emotions it roused in him, the companions he travelled with, the very strangers he met, and all that made the time memorable to him. Now to which of these two men does the picture really *belong*? to the man who has paid for it and neglected it, or to the man who has let it creep into the study of his imagination and become a part of his very mind? In a sense, doubtless, it belongs to them both: in a legal sense to the former, in a spiritual sense to the latter. But which of these two forms is the higher and the more enduring? which ministers most to character and welfare, and which lasts the longest? A fire breaks out; the beautiful picture is consumed. And *now* which of these two men has it? Its legal owner has lost it utterly, and the guineas he gave for it; but the spiritual owner has appropriated it for ever: he can recall it when he will; it still hangs in some accessible chamber of his brain; it is still a treasure to him and a joy.

Really and strictly, then, we *possess* just as much, and only as much, as we can appropriate. But—and here we touch a still more important and practical question—on what does the power of appropriation depend? Obviously it depends on the kind

of life that is in us, on its volume and quality, on the vigour and variety of its faculties, and on the manner in which these faculties have been trained and developed. He who has most life in him, and in whom this life has been best cultivated, will infallibly possess himself of most that is really valuable and enduring. He will see farther into men, and be able both to do more for them and to get more from them, than those can do in whom there is less life, or a life less cultivated and accomplished. He will also see farther into the meaning and beauty of the universe, and appropriate them more largely and fully. All events and all changes, all kinships and possessions, will have more to say to him, and will more variously and profoundly minister to his culture and to his welfare. And it is precisely this great blessing which the Lord Jesus offers us. He offers us life of the highest quality, in the richest abundance. He offers us "the power of an endless life." If we truly love and serve Him, He gives us a life that is spiritual, eternal, divine—a life like his own, and one with his own.

Let us remember, then, what that life did in and for Him. He was poor, destitute even : and yet all things were his. He gently detached Himself from the common kinships of life ; and yet all men were his. All the events of history, all the wonders of nature, all the changes of life, all the occupations and doings of men—He compelled all these to minister to his intellectual and to his spiritual life, and to subserve not his own culture and welfare alone, but also the culture and welfare of the entire world. The divine life that was in Him enabled Him to

appropriate the teaching, the beauty, and the inmost value of whatever met his eye, from the flowers of the field and the ways of the streets to the purple heights of mountains and the unfathomable abysses of the human soul.

Might not He, then, who could give the power of his own life to men, securely promise that whatever they might leave or lose in order to lay hold on this life should be returned to them a hundred-fold? Was there not *in this life* all that made kinships and possessions valuable or dear to them? Did it not give them the power to make whom and what they would their own? And will it not confer a similar power, and an equal reward, on us? If the mind that was in Christ be in us, are not all things ours by the self-same right by which they were his? and have we not the power to make all that is really good and enduring in them our own?

Let us, then, prize and pursue that which is inward rather than that which is outward, that which is spiritual rather than that which is carnal, that which is eternal rather than that which is temporal. The kingdom of God is within us. All that is really valuable and enduring is within us. Accident may, death will, strip us of all else. We can take nothing out of the world except the life we have developed, the character we have formed. And even while we are in the world, our wealth, our well-being, our enjoyment even, depend not on what we can grasp and gain, but on our power to seize and to profit by the teaching, the beauty, the real hidden worth of all that is around us. With this power, and grace to use it, the very poorest of us may be the richest of men.

Strangely as this truth may sound, it is nevertheless familiar to us even to triteness. The only wonder is that we should ever be perplexed by it, meet it where we may. When one of our own poets sings,—

“How happy is he born and taught
That serveth not another's will ;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill.
This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise or fear to fall ;
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet hath all,”

we do not simply admire the ring of his verse ; we feel that he has given fine expression to a simple yet noble truth. And yet those closing lines,—

“Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet hath all,”

are but a paraphrase of Christ's great promise ; they do but put into another form the very truth He taught : viz. that if the true life, the eternal life, be in us, in our utmost poverty we may have all things and abound, receiving the hundred-fold now, in this present time.

II.—WITH PERSECUTIONS.

THE effect which any great truth produces on our minds depends in large measure, not only on the form into which it is thrown, but also on the place in which we meet with it. If it stand in a connection of thought plainly congruous with itself, we are prepared for it ; it presents little difficulty, excites no surprise. But if it suddenly leap out upon us from another level of thought, if we meet it where we had

not looked for it, it not only takes us by surprise, but, presenting itself so unexpectedly and abruptly, it is apt to seem even more difficult than it really is.

Thus, for example, when we read in the Gospel that, for all we leave or lose for Christ's sake, and that we may be true to the principles we have learned from Him, we shall receive a hundred-fold in this present life, most of us are at first taken by surprise; we are perplexed by a statement which hardly seems to accord with the commonest facts of human experience. Yet when we meet with this same truth in certain of our own poets, and in connections of thought which have prepared us to take, and to appreciate, their meaning, we are neither surprised by it nor perplexed. When they tell us that he, who serveth not another's will, whose only armour is his honest thought, while simple truth is his utmost skill, is not only set free from the servile bands of hope to rise or fear to fall, but is also—

“Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet hath all,”

we do not stagger at their doctrine; we rather confess that they have worthily expressed an obvious and accepted truth. Yet the truth they teach is the very truth Christ taught: viz. that to be true to our convictions at all risks and all costs is great gain; that to do right in scorn of consequence is the way to possess ourselves of all that makes life valuable to us; that for whatever we sacrifice for righteousness' sake we receive a hundred-fold even in this present time.

So, again, I suppose no man ever came on these

two words, "with persecutions," without receiving a mental jolt or shock. When we are perusing the long list of gifts and treasures with which Christ promises to reward as many as endure losses and make sacrifices for the sake of truth and righteousness—as houses and lands, brethren and sisters, father and mother, wife and children—it surprises and perplexes us to find "persecutions" in the list. Are persecutions, then, to be reckoned among our treasures? Are we to account the very trials and losses we endure in the service of Christ as part of the reward which He confers on us for serving Him? And yet, when we encounter the very same truth in other forms and other connections of thought, it does not perplex or distress us. When the most musical of living poets exhorts us to follow truth at all hazards; when he affirms that whatever we suffer and lose in this pursuit will contribute to form in us a high and noble character; when he bids us stretch through the years a hand "to catch the far-off interest" of our tears, and assures us that, if we are true to love and duty, we shall find in loss itself "a gain to match," we admit the truth of his thought as well as admire the beauty of the form in which he has expressed it. Yet, after all, what has he taught us save that which Christ taught? and why should the truth, except for its unexpectedness, sound so difficult and forbidding from the lips of our Lord, and yet be so easy and welcome from the lips of a poet who learned it from Him?

The fact is that this phrase, "with persecutions," should present no difficulty to any reflective reader of the New Testament. It is but an abrupt and

condensed expression of a principle which pervades the whole structure of the Christian Scriptures, a principle so frequently iterated and reiterated by our Lord and his Apostles, that it must be reckoned among the very rudiments of the Faith. I need not quote many passages in proof of this assertion, since a few will serve to suggest many more.

Among the beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount, then, we find this : "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake ;" and, again, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." St. James echoes the teaching of his Master and ours, his Brother and ours, when he writes, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials," and pronounces him blessed "that endureth trial," since, when he is proved by trial and approved, "he shall receive the crown of life." St. Peter echoes it when he writes, "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye ;" and St. Paul when he bids us "rejoice in tribulation also," and invites us, by his own example, to "count all things but loss that we may win Christ and be found in him."

"With persecutions," therefore, does not stand alone : it is but a brief and abrupt expression of a pervading principle, of one of the first principles, of the Faith. What that principle implies, and how it may be vindicated and brought home to us, we shall discover if we examine with care any one of the passages I have just cited. Let us take "the beatitude," and ask Christ to be his own interpreter.

In the Beatitudes, then, our Lord, like other great teachers, raises and answers the question, "What is man's chief end, or good?" Like the philosophers of Greece, too, He places our chief good, not in that which is outward, but in that which is inward; not in anything that a man has or can get, but in what a man *is*—in the qualities and dispositions of the soul. The first element of blessedness, He says, is *poverty of spirit*, an inward sense of unworthiness and emptiness, which prompts us to expect nothing from ourselves, but to look for all from Heaven. But when we are thus freed from the self-dependence and self-conceit which would hinder the incoming of Divine truth and grace, we are not to be content with that whereunto we have attained; we are to *mourn* over this inward emptiness, to be sorry and ashamed that we have fallen so low and have lost so much. If we are thus conscious that we are unable to satisfy the vast desires of the soul, and are sincerely mourning over our incapacity and emptiness, we shall be of a *meek*, teachable, and receptive spirit. Nay, more, we shall be devoured with an intense craving, a *hunger and thirst for righteousness*, a sacred inextinguishable longing to become right in our relations to God and man. As this craving is met, we shall grow *merciful*—gentle and compassionate—in our judgment of our neighbours, making the most generous allowance for the emptiness and weakness from which we ourselves are only being delivered by the grace of God. This kindly consideration for others will react on the heart that feels it, making it *pure*, and set it on *making peace*, on bringing into our neighbours'

hearts the peace with God and man of which we have been permitted to taste.

Now if we thus connect the beatitudes pronounced on the poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, we see that our Lord is laying down the lines of a very high and noble character ; and that He places our chief good, our blessedness, in attaining the several virtues and graces of which He speaks. But what is any grace or virtue worth *until it is tried*, and has stood the trial ? An untried grace, what Milton calls "a cloistered and unbreathed virtue," any quality or excellence of character which has not been put to the test, is one of which we ourselves can never feel sure. It is by use and exercise, by enduring hardship and encountering trial, that we at once assure ourselves that any virtue or grace has become ours, that we give the world assurance of it, and that this virtue or grace is trained, developed, brought to perfection. What wonder, then, that our Lord crowns the beatitudes He had pronounced on the distinctive virtues and graces of the Christian character with a blessing on the trials by which they are put to the proof, by which they are breathed, exercised, confirmed ? The list would have been incomplete without this. Our gifts and blessings would have lacked the last perfecting touch had not the trials by which they are tested and approved been included among them. "With persecutions," is a necessary and noble part of our reward as servants of righteousness, since it is by these tribulations that the various elements of the Christian

character are fused and welded into a compact impregnable unity. What do *we* think of a man who will risk nothing, and sacrifice nothing, for his principles, and that a noble and righteous character may be unfolded within him? And why should *Christ* think better of him than we do? No man can account himself faithful and true until he has been tried. The world calls no man faithful and true until he has been tried, and has borne the trial well. And, therefore, the "persecutions" which try us, which put our principles and convictions to the proof, may be justly reckoned among our chief blessings.

The fact is that, whereas we too often account a man blessed if he is exempted from trials, our Lord and his Apostles account him blessed only when he can meet the most searching trials and surmount them. They find "a man's chief good and market of his time," not in the number and variety of the enjoyments he can secure, but in the formation of a high and noble character.† And whom does even the world itself esteem to be men of noble character save those who have achieved great and difficult tasks, who have braved much and sacrificed much for the sake of some great cause, for the defence and furtherance of some neglected truth, who have endured hardship and suffering, defeat and misery, with an unbroken and dauntless spirit? Hence, because of its bearing on character, which is a man's chief possession both in this world and in that which is to come, Christ and his servants have ever taught men to value the trials and sufferings of this present life, to find joy in them because they find good in them.

St. James, for example, bids us "count it all joy when we fall into divers trials;" but why? "Because the trying of our faith worketh patience," and if patience be allowed its perfect work in us, we shall become perfect and complete, lacking nothing. With him too, therefore, trial is good, because it forms character and helps to bring it to perfection. St. Paul, again, bids us "rejoice in tribulation;" but why? Because "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hopefulness." So that he, like Christ, like James, thinks trial good for us because it helps to form a noble and complete character in us.

Now the Christian ideal of human life may not be agreeable to us; but we must not therefore deny that it is the Christian ideal, nor wonder that "persecutions" are counted among the blessings of a good man by those who place this ideal before us. We may shrink from it; in our undue love of ease and success and pleasure, we may decline to make any resolute stand, or to risk any grave loss, for the sake of truth, principle, duty; but we must not, for we cannot honestly, deny that the Christian ideal of character is one which the world has always revered and admired; we must not and cannot deny that the only men whom we ourselves recognize as truly great are those who have lost or risked much in order that they might bear witness to neglected or unpopular truths, or that they might serve some good cause against which the prejudices or interests or passions of their neighbours were enlisted; in short, men "of an incorrigible and *losing* honesty." In art, in politics, in civil strife, in war, as well as in

the Church and in our homes, the men and women whose fame is purest and highest are precisely those who have been the champions of what seemed a losing cause, who have sacrificed their personal interests and ease to the public interest and welfare, who have borne great sufferings with meekness and great losses and defeats with courage, who have loved those who had done little to deserve their love, who have given up all else that they held dear to succour and save the lost, the outcast, the wronged, the miserable, the vile. And can any man complain that Christ calls him, too, *to be great*? to tread the very path which those whom he most admires took before him, and by taking which they won his admiration? If not, let no man complain that among the gifts guaranteed to him by the word of Christ are the losses and tribulations by the faithful endurance of which they were made great.

But it may be thought that "persecutions," at least in the original sense of the word, are no longer among the trials to which men expose themselves by loyalty to the truths and commandments of Christ. Even if they are not, still "persecutions" were only a form which the trials of those who followed Him in darker times assumed; the forms which our trials take may be quite as keen and penetrating. But is it true that those who follow Christ honestly and resolutely are exempt from "persecutions" even now? I doubt it. No man, indeed, or at least no man in England can now be adjudged to the prison or the axe, to the halter or the stake, simply because he believes in Christ; no, not even though he should think out his creed for himself. But to be exposed

to the hatred, the suspicion, the contempt of our fellows is the very sting of persecution. And of those who faithfully follow Christ there are not many who escape this. To call and profess ourselves Christians may provoke nothing more or worse than a smile and a gibe even from those who are most dominated by the law and spirit of this present world. But if any man act out his confession, if he carry Christian principles into his trade or profession, if he shew a regard for the claims and interests of his neighbours even when they clash with his own ; if he insist on getting honest work and paying fair wages ; if he will not give in to sharp measures and lying labels, or the customary adulteration of goods by the intermixture of baser matters ; if he will tell the truth even when it tells against him ; if, in brief, he will be scrupulously upright, generous, considerate, will he suffer no loss and awaken no hostility? Will those with whom he has business relations utter no complaint, think no scorn, take no advantage of him? Impossible! Even now no man can be true to Christ, no man can act on Christian principles even in the world which calls itself Christian, without having to pay for it, without exciting much suspicion and resentment and contempt. Even those who profit by his "weakness" will despise him for it. But there is this great comfort for us, if we thus expose ourselves to the contempt and hostility of the world: Christ regards, and we may regard, these "persecutions" as benedictions. They are the trials which put our principles to the proof; and, by proving, strengthen and confirm them. If they are endured with patience and courage and good-humour, they

help to form in us that pure and lofty ideal of character which Christ at once commended, exemplified, and demanded. We are not to be pitied for them, therefore ; but rather to be congratulated on them. Because they help to make us perfect, they are part of the "hundred-fold" with which our Lord has promised to reward us even in this present time.

The persecutions of primitive times came at least as much from *the Church*—*i.e.* the Jewish Church—as from the world. Does the Church still persecute those who follow Christ? If we consider how the case stands here in England, we can hardly deny it. Do those who claim in a special sense to be Churchmen never look down with contempt and dislike on their Nonconformist neighbours? Do they never suspect their motives, their sincerity, or even their very right to the Christian name? And the Nonconformists in their turn, do they entertain no suspicion of Churchmen, no ill-will toward them, no resentment of the superiority they assume? Do they feel no surprise when they find certain members of the Church to be as simple, as sincere, as devout as themselves? Do they never suspect its worship of formality, or hint that its ministers serve for hire, not for love? But if suspicion, dislike, hostility, be the very sting of persecution, can we say that in the Christian Church in England there is no persecution, whether its members conform or nonconform?

If, again, any man think himself into a conviction at variance with the popular creed, he will find many staunch friends to stand by him, no doubt ; but will he incur no suspicion, no dislike, no unjust and tyrannous rebuke even from the authorities of the

Church and from those who take a law from their lips? But suspicion and dislike are of the very essence of persecution; and so long as any man suffers, save from the weight of argument, for religious opinions honestly and thoughtfully framed, we cannot say that persecution has ceased even in the very Church itself. But to all who suffer from the tyranny of the Church we may say, "Be of good courage. Your trials are putting you to the proof, and shewing of what stuff you are made. To suffer, to make sacrifices, for a principle is the way both to get that principle more deeply wrought into your own soul, and to win acceptance for it at last even from those who now oppose it. Such 'persecutions' are blessings, if they be patiently endured. They are all in 'the hundred-fold' which Christ promised you, and which you are even now already beginning to receive."

Finally, as the years pass, and our relations with men multiply, and we look more searchingly behind the fair outsides of life, if our faith grows more settled and calm, trials are apt to accumulate upon us. Of those whom we love some pass away from us, and some fall into lingering sicknesses; some disappoint the fond hopes we had cherished of them, and others suffer much that is good and admirable in them to be blighted by a secret vice, or propensity, which threatens to be their ruin: cares of business and domestic cares throng in upon us; men who have claims on us push their claims vehemently and offensively; our health declines, perhaps, or we grow conscious that the spring and elasticity of earlier days is gone, and that all tasks are harder to us, and all burdens

heavier to be borne. There are times when one feels as though his heart were turned into a kind of hospital, or asylum, with a sick-bed for this neighbour, and another for that, until the whole heart is taken up with cares and solitudes, and the strain grows well-nigh intolerable. If this be our experience—as at some time it is the experience of most kindly and Christian men—yet why should we complain? This, like every other trial, is Christ's gift to us; it is part of the reward He bestows on them that are his. We have served Him in easier tasks; and now He honours us by asking us to serve Him in a task that is harder. We have met the common tests; and now He applies a still severer test, that, being tried to the full, we may also be blessed to the full. When we thank Him for having called us into his service, and say that for aught we have done for Him we will ask for no reward save that we may serve Him still, and better,—do we mean what we say? Very well, then; in giving us harder tasks and trials more severe and searching, He is but taking us at our word, and giving us the very reward we have asked. Before we complain that life grows heavier to us, and that so many and such exorbitant demands are made on us, let us remember Him who had room in his heart for every man that breathed, and grace for as many as were sick, and strength for as many as were weak, and comfort for all who mourned. Do we not crave and pray to be like Him? And how can we become like Him who learned obedience and was made perfect by the things which He suffered, unless we partake his sufferings for others, unless we bear

our trials, whatever they may be, with a patient and a cheerful heart?

We do not escape our trials by grieving over them; but we may subdue and conquer them by taking them as Christ's gifts to us, as tests of our strength and obedience, and tests designed not simply to shew what manner of spirit we are of, but also to raise and invigorate our spirits by exercising them. It is easy to be cheerful in fine weather and when all things go to our mind; but give me the man who can be cheerful in foul weather and when all things seem to go against him. He is a true man, a man indeed; that is to say, he is a true follower of "the best Man who e'er wore earth about Him."

A clear alternative is before us, therefore. We cannot evade the inevitable burdens and sorrows of life; but we may either sink under them, or rise through and above them. We may take them as wrongs, as undeserved intolerable calamities, and resent them; or we may say of every trial which comes to us, "This is the gift of Christ. Because it is one of my trials, it is also one of my treasures. It comes both to put me to the proof, and to make me better than I am. I must play the man, therefore. I must shew that I am equal to all things, through Christ who strengthens me."

It is recorded that, about a hundred years ago, there occurred in America a day so gloomy and overcast that it is still known as "*the dark day*," the darkest for a hundred years. The legislature of Connecticut was in session, and its members were so stricken with terror by the awful and unaccountable

gloom that many of them supposed the day of judgment was at hand, and proposed that the session should break up. But an old Puritan (Davenport, of Stamford) stood up in the darkness and wild confusion, and said that, if the last day *had* come, he wished to be found in his place, doing his duty, and quietly moved that the candles be lit, and the House proceed with the business in hand. We cannot but admire a man of so constant and brave a spirit. Let us imitate him, then, for he breathed the very spirit of Christ; and whatever dark day or "day of judgment" may come to us, let us set ourselves steadfastly to do the duty and to bear the burden of the time; for so our heaviest trials, since they will do most to strengthen, establish, and ennoble our character, will prove to be our choicest and most enduring blessings.

III.—IN THE REGENERATION.

As there are tarns in the mountains, and those not always the largest, so deep that their bottom has never been sounded, so there are passages in the Bible, and these not always the longest, whose depths we can never exhaust. Unfathomable scriptures, incomprehensible scriptures, we may well call them; and that not merely because they present great difficulties, but mainly because they are so full and hold so much. Such a scripture is the passage before us. We have already glanced at the *hundred-fold* reward which it promises, now in this time, to as many as follow Christ at all risks and all costs; and of the "*with persecutions*" by which that reward is conditioned, and of which it forms part; and we

now pass on to words, "*in the regeneration*," which yield a theme for meditation so vast, so suggestive, so quick with the inspirations of hope, that we cannot expect to sound its depths. Let us at least stoop once more, as we pass by, and sip of its living water.

And, first of all, what do the words mean? What is that which is here called "*the regeneration*"?

The Regeneration is the name of an age, an epoch; and of an age which is to immediately succeed that in which we now live. When we try to conceive of duration, limited and endless duration, we commonly divide it into time and eternity—a very neat, logical, and exhaustive division. And yet this conception, as commonly held, is utterly misleading. If we analyse it, we find that most persons have in their minds the image of a straight line, which may be indefinitely extended at either end; the central part they call "time;" the left-hand extension of it they call "the past eternity," and the right-hand extension of it "the eternity to come." Thus they both detach time from eternity, and cut eternity itself in two, pronouncing that which is endless to have ends. A far truer conception would be to imagine eternity as a vast circle, and time as a shifting point included within it, surrounded on all sides by an unbroken circumference; always remembering, however, that from this moving point of time influences may emanate which, for us at least, will tinge and colour the whole circle of eternity.

Our ordinary conception, whether of time or of eternity, is unscriptural, as well as illogical. For the Scriptures teach us, first, that time, so far from being

an unbroken line, is broken into epochs, or ages, in each one of which some counsel of the Divine Will is wrought out ; thus, for example, it speaks of "ages that are past" and of "ages to come ;" nay, even of "the age of ages," *i.e.* of the one great age which includes all others, of the immense period in which the will of God concerning man as he is at present conditioned will be revealed and accomplished. And, again, whereas we think of eternity as commencing when we die, or at furthest when the present order of the world shall terminate, the Scriptures speak of eternity as both before and beyond all ages, as encircling and interpenetrating them all ; they teach us that there are ages, or epochs of time, or dispensations of Divine providence and grace, which will only commence after the present order of this world shall have been brought to an end.

With special emphasis the New Testament reveals an age beyond the present age, the next in succession to this, in which the life of man will be lifted to a higher power, tried and tested by a new discipline ; an age in which all things shall be made new, in which Christ shall come in his glorified body as He once came in the body of his humiliation, and take to Himself his great power and reign on the earth ; an age previous to that eternal age in which Christ, having brought all enemies to his feet, shall deliver the kingdom to the Father, in order that God may be all in all. This age is variously described as that of the new heaven and the new earth, as "the restitution of all things," as "the resurrection," and as "the regeneration."

And of all the names given it in Holy Writ,

perhaps the most beautiful and expressive is the Regeneration : for this name implies a cosmical renewal, a re-generation of the universe, a re-creation of all things in heaven and in earth. It implies, not simply that all things will be restored to their pristine beauty and perfection, but that a new and higher *spirit* will be infused into them, that a diviner energy will animate and pervade them all ; in short, it implies that a change will pass on the human race and on the whole universe similar, but superior, to that which passes on us now when we are renewed in the spirit of our minds, when we are born again, born from above. In the regeneration of individual men we have our best aid to an intelligent apprehension of what is meant by *the* Regeneration, the regeneration of the universe.

What, then, is the change which passes on us, personally, when we are regenerated, when we become new creatures in Christ Jesus? That change, briefly expressed, amounts to this—that by the influence of the Spirit of all grace that which is spiritual in us is raised to its due and lawful supremacy over all which is merely carnal and temporal in us. We are so quickened that our old love of self-indulgence, our former lusts for pleasure and gain, our deference to the world and the world's law, if they do not wholly pass away, are nevertheless subordinated to our craving for spiritual knowledge, power, gifts. If we are truly regenerate, we care more for the grace of God than for the favour of men ; we lay hold on eternal life and relax our grasp on the mere life of the senses. Christ becomes our ideal of perfect manhood, and we try to become

men in Him. Success in business, in art, in politics, ease and prosperity in any of our earthly relations, no longer stands first with us. Our chief endeavour is to become good, wise, kind, by faithfully following the example of Christ, and by possessing ourselves of the spirit which animated Him. We are resolved and prepared to sacrifice any interest, any habit, any affection even, which would impair our fidelity to the principles we have learned from Him. We welcome any loss or suffering by which we are disciplined in righteousness and charity. If there is anything which we must let go in order to retain our hope of becoming perfect men in Him, we let it go, however reluctantly and sadly. All this is included in giving the supremacy to that which is spiritual in our nature ; all this, therefore, is included in the ideal which the regenerate set before them, and toward which they are always striving, however imperfectly they attain it.

Now even *this* new birth involves a new creation. To the regenerate man there is granted a new heaven and a new earth even in this present time. Not, indeed, that any physical change passes on the physical universe, making it a different thing for him to what it is for the unregenerate ; but that his relation to it is changed, his standard of judgment, his sense of its meaning, his measure and estimate of its worth. For him the universe is no longer a vast complex of mysterious forces working out into varied but orderly results ; it is also a revelation of the character and will of God, his Father. For him man's life is no longer only the long result of climatic and social influences modified by the bias and tem-

perament he inherits from his forefathers ; it is instinct with a tender gracious Providence which so portions out his lot as to secure his true and ultimate welfare. As he studies the past, what most attracts and impresses him is no longer the wars of kings, nor the triumphs of art, nor even the social and political changes by which men have won their way to an ordered freedom, or are still pressing on toward it ; not these things in themselves and for their own sake attract him most, but the signs he discovers in them that God is conducting the education and development of the world, leading it on to that final goal of good which lies beyond the range of mortal vision. As he looks around him, he, who was once engaged by the motion, splendour, and variety of the world, and eagerly competed with his fellows for the prizes of their ambition, now sees an infinite worth in much which they still despise, and pursues an aim too high and distant for them so much as to perceive. In short, throughout the whole range of human experience and thought, that which is invisible, moral, spiritual, lays its spell upon him ; that which he most cherishes and esteems is represented to him by such words as virtue, duty, faith, love, religion. Are not all things *new* to such a one as this ? Does he not walk beneath a new heaven and on a new earth, when all that heaven and earth contain are so differently adjusted and related to his spirit ?

Well, this process of regeneration, with which happily so many of us are familiar, will help us to conceive the main features of the coming age, to

picture to ourselves the kind of life which will obtain in the Regeneration.

The first and most natural conception to which it conducts us is, that this happy spiritualizing change, which has only been begun in us here, will there be completed, carried on to its perfection. We shall become *new men*—new, and yet the same. All that now impedes the development of a high and noble character in us, whether it reside in our inward nature or our outward conditions, will be removed. This mortal will put on immortality, this corruptible incorruption. The “natural body,” which in so many and subtle ways hampers the motion and growth of the soul, will be exchanged for “the spiritual body;” for a body, that is, sweetly and harmoniously attuned to the faculties and energies, the virtues and graces, of the spirit which inhabits it, a body exquisitely attuned to spiritual harmonies and visions of heavenly beauty, a body whose organs will be as receptive and pliant to all the perceptions, influences, motions of faith, hope, charity, as the eye now is to the impact of light or the ear to the concord of sweet sounds. And so also the hard and hindering conditions amid which we live—the folly, the vanity, the greed, the aversion to things spiritual, the passionate and exhausting pursuit of gain, position, power, enjoyment, which, so long as they are exhibited by our neighbours, are constant sources of temptation to us, and perpetually drag us down from any height of character we have painfully attained—all these will pass away; they will be exchanged for the fellowship of kindred minds, for the society of “spiritual” intelligences, for the companionship and sympathy and

aid of the good, the wise, the pure. In the new heaven and the new earth righteousness is to dwell; and hence all that now tempts and saddens and degrades us will cease any more to vex and afflict us. No noble thought, no pure emotion will then be suppressed for lack of quick and instant sympathy; no heroic task, no labour of devotion, of thought, of service and self-sacrifice will be resigned for want whether of inward power or of outward furtherance. All our conditions, often so unfavourable here and now to spiritual growth and excellence, will there be propitious to the development of that which is highest in us and best. And is not this a prospect to fire the soul? to kindle in it the fervours of a holy ambition, an unconquerable hope? To possess a body that shall no longer clog and impede the spirit, but help and further it; and to dwell in conditions favourable to the pursuit of wisdom, goodness, perfection—does not this include all that we most deeply crave?

But even yet the prospect is not complete. For as to the regenerate man old things pass away, and all things become new by being newly related and adjusted to him; so, in the Regeneration, we are promised a new heaven and a new earth. Then, so at least the prophets both of the Old and the New Testaments assure us, the regeneration, commenced in the spirits of men, is to spread and extend to the physical universe, to infuse a new force and life and spirit into it; so that in very deed all things shall become new, and the whole creation shall be redeemed from its subjection to vanity and corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

Science standing wrapt in perplexity and astonishment before the mysteries of the origin of matter, of force, of life, of thought; and Philosophy standing no less perplexed and astonished before the mysteries of pain, destruction, death, and the origin and function of evil, have this for their last word for us: that, in all probability, the visible universe is only a manifestation in time and space, "a manifold phenomenon" of the *unseen* universe; that within and behind all that we see there lies a spiritual universe in which are hidden the causes of this great natural scheme and order amid which we live; that by "the dissipation of energy" it is very certain that this physical universe must sooner or later come to an end, and that, when it does come to an end, the forces and energies which compose and sustain it will be found to have been reabsorbed by the unseen spiritual universe from which it sprang. That is to say, Science and Philosophy are at last tending to the conclusion which Christ announced eighteen centuries ago, viz. that the origin of the material universe is purely spiritual; that all which is merely or grossly material will one day pass away; and that then there will come "the regeneration," some more spiritual and perfect manifestation of the Creative energy, in which there will be none of the defects and hindrances that inhere in all that is physical and temporal. In short, the invisible will shine through the visible, the eternal through the temporal, the real through the phenomenal. But all this, which we find it so hard to think out and express, and which Science and Philosophy have taken so long to reach and formulate, St. John beheld in vision, and has ex-

pressed for us in words as simple as they are stately and impressive: "*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. . . . And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people. . . . And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*"

We gain a second suggestion as to the kind of life we may look for in the Regeneration, a suggestion of its infinite *variety*, if we glance at some other words of this great promise. "*Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*" The first and happiest thought which occurs to any reflective reader of this verse is that in the coming age we shall be under the immediate rule of the Son of Man. By the very title He assumes—Son of Man—our Lord reminds us of what He was and did when He came to dwell among us in great humility; how pure He was, yet how tender; how righteous, and yet how kind. And surely it should fill us with pleasure and hope to learn that, in the Regeneration, we are to see Him whom we have so often longed to see, and to see this gentle righteous Man seated on the throne of the universe; that we are to be under the sway of his sceptre and his spirit. Fallen and sinful as the world is, I verily believe that, if it had to elect a universal King to-day, it would

elect the man Christ Jesus, finding no rival, no peer, to Him even in those who stand highest above their fellows. It were much to be visibly ruled by Him here and now; to feel that our whole life, social, commercial, political, were governed and controlled by Him, and not only our religious life—that He sat on the throne of the world as well as on the throne of our hearts. But what must it be, what of high and noble blessedness is involved in the mere thought of our being subjects of the risen and glorified Son of Man *in the regeneration*, when the renewal of our spirits shall be perfected, when they shall no longer be thwarted and oppressed by this mortal frame, with its weaknesses and biasses toward evil, and when all our fellow-subjects shall be at least as high in spiritual character and attainment as ourselves! We might well sigh impatiently for the coming of that day, if God had not taught us that we can only reach and enjoy it as we pass with patience and fidelity through the days which lead from this to that.

The reign of the Son of Man will give that unity to our coming life without which progress is impossible; but for progress, for growth, we need variety as well as unity; and the variety of our coming life is indicated by the promise made to the Twelve that, in the Regeneration, they should be kings with Christ, kings under Christ, judging and ruling the twelve tribes of the true Israel. Of course this language is figurative, and its details must not be pressed too far. But from all we know of Peter and James, John and Paul, and the rest of "the glorious company," we should at least admit that

they excel the princes and kings of the earth who now rule over us, and that it would be well for us to live in an empire the several provinces of which were ruled by them. And even if we cannot positively affirm that the provinces of the coming spiritual kingdom will be dominated by the spirits of these twelve elect men, and that we shall be permitted to pass from province to province, and to learn what each of these ruling spirits can teach us, we may surely infer from the promise of Christ that in his kingdom an immense variety of spiritual forces and influences will be employed, of all of which we may take the benefit; that men of every kind of spiritual character and in every stage of spiritual development will find in it that which exactly ministers to their condition, their tastes, their needs; so that for each and for all there shall be enough and to spare. Nothing less than this, but much more, is implied in the promise that we shall all be under one King, and shall yet enjoy the ministry of many kings; that while Christ rules over all, and his spirit dominates all, He will also rule through the men who of all men are most venerable to us and most dear.

So far as this we go, but no farther; but is not this far enough? Does not this prospect content us? Is it not enough, if only we hold it stedfastly before our minds, to raise us above the temptations and allurements of the flesh, the world, and the devil? Dare we risk this great and noble inheritance in order to secure the gratification of a moment, to pander to that which is lowest in us and worst?

We may risk, we may even lose it; for only the regenerate can hope to share in the blessedness of the Regeneration. The work of renewal must be begun now, if it is to be completed then. If any of us should pass out of this present age unrenewed in the spirit of our minds, it is impossible to foresee exactly what will befall us in "the age to come," and still less in "the age of the ages." But the very best we can ever hope for is that, as we have failed to profit by the discipline of this age, painful and severe as it often is, we shall be exposed to a still severer discipline in the age to come, and, meantime, must inevitably lose the blessedness and glory of the Regeneration. There can be no clear hope for any man until by some means, through some discipline, he has been taught to put that which is spiritual in him first, and to value it most. We should not suffer half we do suffer even here, were we to yield to the gentler discipline of the Divine grace, and to let the Spirit make us spiritual men. What we may have to suffer in the unknown future, under what stern discipline we may be brought, if when we leave this world we are still carnal in our purposes and motives and aims, it is not for us to conjecture, and God forbid that we should ever know. It is our duty, rather, to dwell on the dignity and blessedness of those who walk after the Spirit, who honestly love truth and goodness and serviceableness above all the gauds of time both in this age and in the next, and thus to rouse ourselves to lay hold upon eternal life; that so, when the Son of Man shall sit down in the throne of his glory, we may be glorified together with Him.

THE RAINBOW.

REVELATION VI. 3.

THE rainbow appears, and vanishes, and reappears in the Biblical very much as it does in the natural world. It spans the sky of the very first book in the Bible, where it is raised to the power of a covenant—made the symbol of the most generous and unconditional of covenants, a covenant in which God pledges Himself, but exacts no pledge from man. It reappears in the writings of the prophets; their allusions to the covenant with Noah being frequent and pathetic. And, finally, in the very last book of the Bible, it is raised to a still higher power, and shines round the throne of God in heaven.

A phenomenon so lovely, so delicate and spiritual, as the rainbow has naturally excited the imagination, not of the poets alone, but even of the commentators, who, not very justly I think, are commonly regarded as the dullest and least imaginative of men. They have found in it a symbol of whatever unites in itself the earthly and the heavenly, the human and the divine; and some of the earlier of them ventured to call Christ Himself “the Rainbow,” because in his person the human and the Divine natures are reconciled and commingled. But so to generalize the spiritual meaning and intention of the rainbow is to cast away that which is special and peculiar to it; for there are many other natural phenomena which blend earthly and heavenly elements. Here, as almost everywhere else, the simplest and most obvious interpretation of the symbol is at once the most

definite and the best. And by any unsophisticated mind the dark raincloud across which the bow is bent is taken as a symbol of the sins by which men obscure their inner heaven, or of the judgments which dog their sins ; while the sunshine which casts the bow on the cloud is taken as a symbol of the Divine Love that absolves men from their sins, of that Mercy which is the final intention of judgment. So often as this fair and delicate apparition appears in the sky, hallowing and etherealizing the tear-besprinkled earth, we are reminded of the cleansing power of penitence, of the Compassion which seeks to make our lives the brighter and the sweeter for our very sins, of the lavish and inalienable Goodness which, by a divine alchemy, draws new promise and new hope even from our darkest transgressions. It is impossible—if at least we give our natural piety fair play—to look thoughtfully at the bow shining in a sky in which light is at the point to triumph over darkness, bending over an earth sweetened and enriched by the very rains which have fallen on it, and transfiguring it into a pure and mystic beauty, without receiving from it, as our first and deepest impression, an assurance that “God’s love is more than all our sins,” that somehow good is to be the final goal of ill, that the whole creation is moving on to some far-off divine event which will solve all the problems and redress all the wrongs of time. The sun does not shine on every shower, nor glorify every cloud ; but when it does shine on and through the streaming rain, it throws a light of promise over the world. And therefore the rainbow is an incarnate promise ; it is the very embodiment of

hope. It speaks, or should speak, to us of a time when evil shall be overcome by good. It assures us that there *is* an answer to all the problems by which we are perplexed, though perhaps we cannot reach it yet ; and that we *shall* reach and rejoice in it some day. It assures us that there is a remedy for all the ills under which we groan, and that this remedy will be applied, if not within, yet beyond the borders and coasts of time.

And perhaps the fact that both the prophet Ezekiel and the seer in the isle of Patmos saw a rainbow *round the throne of heaven* may involve a hint that, so long as we are compassed about with the infirmities and limitations of the flesh, we must not expect to solve the problems, or to escape the trials, which afflict us now and here ; it may imply that only when that which is spiritual has come, only when we ourselves have become "pure heavenly," only when we stand before 'the throne, will the long, sad, mysterious story of Time unfold its true meaning, and all the way in which God has led us be explained and justified by the end to which it has conducted us.

To us, as to Noah and his family, the rainbow is a sign, a proof, a prediction that mercy is to rejoice over judgment : to them it brought the assurance that, let men sin as they would, God would never again sweep them away with a flood ; and to us it brings the assurance that, let men sin as they may, and whatever the miseries they may breed by their sins for a time, all the darknesses and sorrows of human life are to be penetrated and suffused by the transfiguring light of the Divine Love. It suggests

that the end is to vindicate and crown the work of God.

No promise is more welcome to us than this ; and therefore it has a fitting symbol in the rainbow, than which no natural phenomenon is more delicately beautiful or more suggestive of hope. But no promise is more incredible to us ; for we see neither that it is being, nor how it is to be, accomplished : and therefore it is, I suppose, that as the rainbow gleams along the whole Bible from end to end, so this promise of the final victory of good is wrought into the very substance of Scripture from its commencement to its close. In the very first book of the Bible we hear of a salvation committed, for a time, to a single race, in order that, through them, all the families of the earth may be blessed. And from that time onward the promise grows even more full and distinct. Thus Isaiah never wearies of depicting the new heavens and the new earth in which righteousness shall dwell. Joel breaks into an extasy as he sees the Spirit of God poured out *on all flesh*—young men and maidens, old men and children, free-men and slaves. Zephaniah can rejoice in the very judgments of Jehovah, because he sees that by these God will turn *to the nations* a pure lip and cause them to serve Him with one shoulder, until *all the isles of the heathen*, every one from its place, shall worship Him. In like manner Habakkuk looks through all the clouds and terrors of time, and sees *the whole earth* filled with the knowledge of God as the water covers the deep. Malachi affirms that men are passed through the furnace which burns up all unrighteousness, only that *from the rising of the sun*

to the going down thereof God's name may be great among the nations, and that *in every place* incense may be burned to his name, and a pure worship be offered on the altar of the universal heart. The Gospels reveal a Sacrifice which taketh away the sin *of the world*, a Cross which is to draw *all men* to Christ and change them into his image, and a kingdom which is to rule over all. St. Paul affirms that God has shut up all under sin, that He may have mercy on *all*. St. Peter speaks of a salvation which extends even to Hades, throws open the prison-doors of the disobedient dead, and rescues even the guilty race which was swept away by the Flood. And in the last book of the Bible St. John rifles the whole universe of its splendours in order to set forth the glory of that city and kingdom in which *the nations* of the saved walk in white. True, there is another side to this bright and glowing picture. The very prophets, who labour to depict the wide all-embracing sweep of the Divine Compassion and Love, speak also of searching and terrible judgments to be executed on the ungodly both in this world and in that which is to come. But what we have to mark is that they speak of these very judgments as designed to cleanse and purify either men or the world in which they are to dwell ; and that beyond these dark clouds of judgment they invariably see a land of righteousness and peace and joy, a whole world of renewed men walking in a new earth and beneath a new heaven.

We need not faintly trust the larger hope, therefore. We may be sure that our largest hopes for men will be transcended. And we need the assurance, and to be constantly reminded of it. For we

are too apt to walk with eyes fixed on the ground, or lifted only to take in the narrow range of facts and events immediately around us. And *here*, we can often detect no sign of progress, no prophecy of hope. *We* are so weak and so wicked, and the world close around us is, for the most part, not only weak, but so unconscious of its weakness—not only wicked, but so indifferent to its wickedness—that we often lose hope both for ourselves and for the world at large. We need, therefore, to look out on human life through the eyes of the prophets, and to see the vast prophetic hope which, for them at least, stretches across the whole horizon and sheds down its clear spiritual light on the whole family of man. The clouds just above and around us may be dark and threatening; a cold and bitter rain may be falling on us: but, see, the sun is breaking through the clouds, and shining on them; faint and broken gleams of colour tremble through the air, melt into each other, and take definite form; the bow spans the sky, and, under its magical hues, the whole earth is transformed; the birds break forth into singing, the flowers kindle their censers and fill the air with fragrance. We all know what lovely and delicate transformations take place as the bow gleams forth on the clouds; how it seems at once to hallow and to brighten the earth, so that, standing beneath its vast mystic arch, we feel as though we had entered some great temple and were taking part in an act of solemn and elevating worship. And the change thus wrought on the face of nature, or on the eyes with which we regard it, is not more pure and gladdening than the change wrought upon our hearts when once we grasp

the truth it symbolizes and rest upon it. To believe that, because God is love, He is for ever educing good from ill, and that, through all its sins and miseries, the world is passing on to righteousness, charity, peace—this is, as it were, to have a rainbow for ever shining in our beclouded hearts ; it is to gain a clear sustaining hope which hallows and spiritualizes our whole conception of human life. With this great hope for the world's future, we cease to mind earthly things ; for our hearts are set on seeing men grow, not in power, or wealth, or ease, but in righteousness and love. And from this hope, moreover, we draw strength and courage for all our endeavours to raise men and better them. We cannot despair of a world which God is saving, which He has declared that He will save at all costs. We cannot forbode failure for any enterprise which is honestly intended to instruct or elevate it ; for we know that, in taking part in them, we are working towards the very end which God Himself has in view.

And while we gain this large hope for the world, we may also gain a better hope, and therefore a more stedfast design and a firmer endeavour, for our individual lives. There is a latent rainbow in every single drop of dew, as well as in the streaming shower. And there must be hope for every man, or how could there be hope for all men ? *We*, we may be sure, are included, in common with our fellows, in the vast design which embraces the renewal of the human race, the salvation of the world.

And if any of us are called to pass through many and searching sorrows, we shall do well to remember

that those who live in the high lands, and are most exposed to shower and storm, see most of the rainbow too. To be much exposed to trial is to be brought very near to that Love, touched by which all clouds grow bright with hope.

Nor do I think it fanciful to derive from the Scripture use of the rainbow a hint on that great mystery, the purpose and function of evil. We soon grow weary of staring colours and blazing suns ; but who ever grew weary of the subdued and tender hues of the rainbow ? And, perchance, the irradiation of our sin-obscured lives by the stedfast love of God may yield a more tender and pathetic beauty, a beauty more various and mystical, than the clear outshining of his goodwill in cloudless skies. Man *may* rise by his very fall, and become the more like God by a knowledge of good and evil.¹

But as yet I have only touched on the rainbow and its spiritual suggestions, its incentives to hope ; I have said nothing about the rainbow *round the throne* of heaven, or nothing beyond this : that, probably, the rainbow is carried on and up into heaven in order to intimate that its prediction of a happy solution to all the problems of time will be fulfilled only when we enter heaven and put on immortality. But do we thus exhaust the meaning of the position given to the bow of hope in the passage before us ? We do not even touch what I take to be its chief meaning. If St. John transfers earthly symbols to the heavenly world, it is only reasonable to assume that he uses them in their familiar sense, in order that he may thus convey to

¹ Genesis iii. 22.

us some faint conception of mysteries which we do not comprehend. If he uses them in a wholly new sense, what can they teach us of the new world into which he lifts our thoughts? No, we may be sure that he uses them in their old sense, and wishes us to transfer the conceptions they suggest into that strange heavenly world. But in that case heaven can hardly be either the place, or the state, which many of us have assumed it to be. For, as we have seen, the rainbow is the symbol of a heavenly light shining on earthly clouds; it is the symbol of a Divine Love penetrating, suffusing, transfiguring, the wrongs and sins and miseries of time: it is a prophecy of the final triumph of good over evil. And if there is a rainbow in the sky of heaven, must there not be problems there which we shall not be able to solve, and perhaps sufferings the full meaning of which we shall not be able to see, even though we are being made perfect by them? Must not the rainbow round the throne be intended to remind us that, even in heaven, God, and God's ways, must remain inscrutable to us, and to promise us that, as we advance in the heavenly life and get nearer to "the throne," we shall nevertheless more and more fully apprehend Him and his ways? It may be that when we reach the heavenly shore, we shall be able to look back and see our earthly life in a new light which shall explain and justify it to us; but in that new and vaster life on which we shall then enter must there not be much which we cannot grasp at once, and perhaps even a discipline in wisdom and holiness which will be so far in advance

of that whereunto we have attained a s that, at times, it may pain and perplex us ?

Opposed as such a conception of heaven may be to the assumptions current in the Church, it is in full accord with the teachings both of reason and of Holy Writ. St. John, for example, tells us in the immediate context,¹ that he saw a door opened in heaven, that he went through the door, and beheld the worship of the heavenly temple. In a pause of the worship a strong angel brings a sacred roll, a scripture—or rather seven scriptures in one roll, each of which has its own seal—and demands who will break the seal and read the writings. Here, then, was a mystery in heaven ; here was a sealed scripture, containing a sevenfold disclosure of the Divine Will ; and of all the inhabitants of heaven not one was “ found worthy,” or “ able to open the book, or even to look thereon.” Only the Lamb could do that. And whatever else and more all this may mean, can it mean less than this—that, at least at the date at which St. John wrote, there were mysteries of the Divine Will utterly unfathomable to the denizens of heaven until Christ interpreted those mysteries to them ?

So, again, in Chapter vi. verse 9, we are told that St. John saw the souls of the martyrs gathered under the altar on which they had been slain, and heard them cry out with a loud voice, “ How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ? ” Here, once more, was a mystery in heaven, a painful and perplexing mystery—justice postponed, if not denied,

¹ Revelation iv. and v.

and the souls of the faithful martyrs held back, in some ineffable way, from the reward for which they yearned.

Now surely, if St. John's picture of the heavenly world has any truth or force for us, that world must include in it many problems not solved, or solvable, by the intellect of the redeemed, and some which even press painfully on their hearts.

And can any modest and reasonable man suppose that, the very moment he enters heaven, *he* will comprehend the mysteries which St. John could make nothing of till an interpreting angel was sent to explain them to him? that he will at once, or ever, master *all* the wonders and secrets of the spiritual world? Can any modest and reasonable man imagine that he will find out the Almighty to perfection the very instant he is admitted to his presence? Must not the Infinite ever remain a mystery to the finite? Must not God ever be, and do, that which it will task, and perplex, and baffle our feeble intellects to explain and vindicate?

Nor let any man say that *this* is but a poor heaven as compared with that which he has been wont to anticipate. If it seem poorer to any man, that is only because it is so much greater and richer. For what can be a more noble and attractive prospect to any reflective and devout mind than this: to be always advancing in wisdom and holiness, yet ever to see stretching before us new fields of wisdom to be traversed, new attainments to be won; to be ever drawing nearer to God, yet ever to find in Him new wonders, new depths, new claims on our confidence and love and praise? If there be *a cloud*

of impenetrable mystery around his throne, *a rainbow* gleams upon the cloud, assuring us that the cloud is big with mercy, fraught with benediction, and that, while we shall come to apprehend its wonders as we press onward, we shall nevertheless find in them ever new wonders to awe and attract and delight our souls. It is the wonder of *this* world—the secrets to be discovered in it, the anomalies which are for ever being reduced to law, the apparent discords and contradictions which are for ever being resolved into harmony, which render it so attractive, so instructive, so dear to us. And shall the heavenly world be poorer and less wonderful than this? We may be sure that it is not. We may be sure that, when we rise into it, we shall enter into a vast realm of wonders, transcending not our present powers of conception alone, but all finite powers, a world ever new, ever various, ever beckoning us on to new endeavours and new attainments. To the thoughtful and devout no prospect can be more alluring; to them, therefore, the very throne of God grows the more beautiful, and the more precious, for the rainbow round about the throne. CARPUS.

*GOD'S PERFECT LAW OUR DESPAIR AND OUR
COMFORT.*

PSALM cxix. 96.

THIS Psalm, as we may infer from its very structure, belongs to a late and somewhat degenerate period of Jewish literature. It is no fresh and spontaneous outburst of song ; it does not well up from a full heart to musical lips as freely and melodiously as the notes of a bird. It has neither the fire nor the sweet natural simplicity of David's lyrical raptures. Artificial in structure, laboured in composition, a collection of proverbs rather than a flow of song, it is obviously the work of an age when more attention was paid to form than to substance, and art was superseding nature.

Indeed it is quite curious to observe with how many fetters the Poet has clogged the free and natural motions of his spirit, within what narrow limits he has compelled it to move. In place of singing in "full-throated ease," he sets himself to solve a difficult and complicated problem, to achieve a great literary feat. How could any man, whatever his gifts, hope to sing a sweet and sequent song under conditions so hard as these ? There are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet ; and therefore there must be two and twenty sections in his Psalm. Each of these sections is to consist of eight verses, and every eight to begin with the same letter of the alphabet. First there must be eight initial Alephs, or A's, then eight initial Beths, or B's, and so on right away through the alphabet. In every verse, though there are a hundred and seventy-six of them (22 by 8), the

Divine Law must be mentioned, although the Poet's vocabulary contains at the most only ten synonyms for it,—as statutes, judgments, testimonies, precepts. And the Sacred Name, the name of Jehovah, must be brought into the Psalm exactly twenty-two times, once for each letter of the Alphabet. To fulfil these onerous conditions, which seem to render all freedom and mobility of thought simply impossible, and yet to introduce a separate and valuable thought into each verse of the Psalm, is a feat which, in its own way, is perhaps as great as was ever achieved by the wit of man.

But it is a kind of feat for which very rightly we feel little respect. A man *may* dance in fetters, no doubt, and so dance as to excite our wonder and admiration by his blended strength and dexterity; but how much better and more admirably would he have danced without them? And a poet who voluntarily clogs his natural vigour and grace with artificial and pedantic restrictions may so far master them as to compel our astonishment; but he cannot touch and move us like the poet who pours out his natural song without restraint, and moreover he diverts our thoughts from his song to himself; we admire his dexterity instead of yielding ourselves to the charm and power of his theme. This ingenious and elaborate acrostic, for example, is not to be compared for power and beauty with Psalm xix. Both have the same theme—the goodness and sweetness of the Divine Law; but David's song is bright and artless as the music of the grove, while the Psalm before us, when compared with that, sounds like an artificial declamation intoned by a rabbi or a priest.

In so far as the mere form and structure of the Psalm are concerned, one of the most useful purposes to which we could put it would be a controversial one. Nothing is more degrading to the Word of God than the verbal and mechanical theories of inspiration which still have some vogue in certain sections of the Church. And, whatever theory he may hold, how can any reasonable man maintain that *the structure*, the external form, of this Psalm is from God? It is easy to conceive of the Holy Ghost as *using* any form of literature, however debased, in order to teach men and do them good. But surely it is impossible to conceive of Him as *selecting* such forms; as moving a man to write an elaborate and complicated acrostic, to sacrifice nature to art, and sense to form, and spirit to letter; as impelling him to tie broken and disjointed thoughts together by a mere alphabetical thread. That even this unknown Psalmist was taught of God, that he received the truths embodied in his verse from heaven, we freely admit, we heartily believe; but who can doubt that he was left to choose his own form of utterance, or rather to adopt the Rabbinical forms of his age? who will venture to ascribe his alphabetical and other verbal dexterities to the inspiration of the Holy Ghost? What is true and good and noble in the Psalm we attribute to the God who inspired it; what is imperfect, ignoble, merely dexterous and ingenious, we attribute to the man who wrote it.

The peculiar form of the Psalm has one happy result; viz., that we may safely detach any verse from its context and consider it apart. In order to secure unity of form the Psalmist was compelled to sacrifice

unity of substance: he could not carry out his ingenious alphabetical device without looking to letters and words rather than to logical sequences of thought. Hence almost every verse is self-contained, and has little connection with those before and after it, save that of its initial letter. In short, the Psalm resembles a jeweller's chest, in which many valuable gems are arranged, not according to their several kinds, nor so as that their contrasting lustres may enhance their beauty, but simply according to a set of arbitrary trade symbols. You may take up any one of them and look at it apart; it will lose nothing by being separated from its companions; it may gain much by being held to the light.

In the sentence before us we have one such jewel—a gem of purest ray; a self-contained proverb, which, though it has the form and place of a verse in a Psalm, is really a separate and independent statement of a great truth. Its value is in itself; we gain nothing for it by a study of the context. Let us look at it by itself, then, and ask what it has to teach us.

"I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad." Do these words mean, as by their mere logical connection they seem to mean, that the Psalmist, in his long quest after perfection, had at last discovered that *nothing* was perfect, not even the Divine law? Does he intend to say, "After long and diligent search, the commandment of God is the best thing I have found; but even that is only 'very broad'—approaching perfection, but not attaining it"? No, he does not mean to deny the perfection of the Law that came by

Moses, though *we* may deny it, and *must* deny it. For the Law was only the shadow which the Gospel cast before. To us, therefore, the Law is not the most complete, not the perfect publication of the will of God. But the Jew had nothing better; and the whole tone of this Psalm shews that the rabbi who wrote it held it to be perfect beyond all compare.

Did he mean, then, to affirm that the Law *alone* was perfect? Did he intend to imply that, though he had looked for perfection in men, in nations, in modes and schools of thought, in his own heart and life; he had been disappointed again and again, driven to the conclusion that perfection was to be found only in that Divine law and ideal of life which stood so high above all performance? Doubtless, this was his meaning. He had seen the thoughts and conditions of men change and shift in many ways. He had hoped that by some of the changes and forms of discipline through which they were drawn, they might be raised to a perfect obedience to the Divine will. He had clung to this teacher and that, this saint and that, trusting that at last he had discovered a perfect man; but even in the wisest he had found some touch of folly, even in the purest some taint of sin. Possibly, too, he had indulged in similar hopes for himself, thinking, believing that when he had gained this point or that—when he was older, or wiser, when time had dulled the edge of his passions, or experience had simplified and raised his aims—he might rise into a mode of life more happily ordered, into a condition in which the imperfections of his character and service would be

removed. But, as in others, so in himself, he has been disappointed—disappointed more bitterly in himself than in his neighbours. He is conscious that imperfections still cleave to him; that he has both fallen short of his mark, and that his mark has risen still higher as he has approached it, until at last he is bereft of hope, and no longer expects to find that which is perfect, whether in himself or in the world. “I have seen an end of all perfection.”

Now, as we listen to him, it would be very easy to take a cynical tone, and say, “Why, what a thing is here! Here is a man of large and varied experience puling and puking like a green girl over a fact familiar to every thoughtful and observant mind! For who, after the first flush of youth has passed—who expects to find perfect men about him, or to have his conditions shaped to his mind? Let us have done with these impossible ideals and sentimental complaints, take men as we find them, and be thankful if we can secure a tolerable amount of comfort, and come fairly up to the current and standard morality of our time.”

It would be equally easy to take a weak sentimental tone, and say, “Ah, yes, how true that is! I have trusted men, and they have disappointed me. I have striven and searched for a perfection I could never reach. If for a time I have fancied I had found it in this friend or that, I have been bitterly undeceived. Let us quit this impossible quest, then. Let us sit still, and mourn over the irclaimable weakness and wickedness of the world.”

It would be as easy as it would be foolish to take either of these tones, and at times, I suppose, most

of us do take both of them. But we have no encouragement to take them in the words of the Psalmist, nor even, if we wisely consider them, in the facts of our own experience.

We often assent to the Psalmist's verdict, "I have seen an end of all perfection," and yet, after all, do we heartily and practically assent to it? "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." However often we have been deceived, we still look forward with expectation, with what perhaps we call "a chastened expectation." Our life, we think, might so very easily be made happier and better than it is, so mere a trifle would lead in such large issues of content, that surely a time must be coming in which, not the wild dreams of our youth indeed, but the chastened and sober expectations of experience will be fulfilled. No change of outward conditions has made us what we fain would be hitherto, nor given us all we crave: but it would not take very much to content us now; and as we advance along the path of life—when we have gained the competence for which we have laboured, when we have achieved the task we long since prescribed ourselves, when we have conquered this bad habit or acquired that new relation—surely we shall reach what we have so long sought, and find our character and our conditions to our mind. Who, after all, wholly despairs of himself, or of the world? He does not despair of himself who is for ever listening to the flattering tale, that all will go well with him when he has educated and placed his children, when he has secured this or that opening for business, or is able to retire from business; when he has acquired

a little more money, or a little more leisure, or a little more health, or a little more knowledge, or a little more grace. Nor does he despair of the world who can still strive to teach it, and mend it, and pray for it, who can rebuke its follies, who is saddened by a sense of its miseries, or lifts so much as one of his fingers to the burdens under which his neighbours groan. The fact is that, despite the despairing and pessimist tone we sometimes affect, so far from feeling that we have seen an end of all perfection, most of us are still searching for it, and striving toward it: if we admit that the world has not seen it yet, we are only the more eager that the world should see it, the more sanguine that it will see it one day.

But though we cannot honestly say, in the cynical sense of the words, that we have seen an end of all perfection, there is a sense in which they are very true, and in which it is well that we should heartily adopt them. It behoves us—not despairingly, and still less satirically and scornfully, but humbly and patiently—to confess that we ourselves are not perfect, and therefore have no right to expect perfection in our neighbours. For beyond a doubt we are apt, as the illusions of life pass away, to abate our hopes for men and to slacken in our endeavours to better them and their conditions. We find that, at the best, we can do so little for them, and that often they are so little worthy of what we do, that we are tempted to refrain from doing even the little which lies within our power. Beyond a doubt, too, as the years pass, and we find that we ourselves are so little the better for all our endeavours after a better life, we are apt to abate our endeavours, to content ourselves

with aiming at a lower mark, to lose the enthusiasm which would once be content with nothing short of perfection. And, therefore, we need—especially if we are advancing in years—to get from the Psalmist's words whatever stimulus and encouragement they contain.

They offer us a double comfort and encouragement. We may read them in two ways: (1) "I have seen an end of all perfection; *for* thy commandment is exceeding broad;" and (2) "I have seen an end of all perfection, *but* thy commandment is exceeding broad." Read in the first way, they suggest the animating thought, that our haunting consciousness of imperfection springs from the bright and awful perfection of the Law we are bent on obeying, of the Ideal we have set before us. It is not because we are worse than those who are without law, or who are a law unto themselves, that we are restless and dissatisfied with ourselves; but because we measure both ourselves and our fellows by the lofty standards of God's commandment. It is because that commandment is so broad, that we cannot embrace it; it is because it is so high, that we cannot attain to it; it is because it is so perfect, that we cannot perfectly obey it.

The content, the entire self-satisfaction, of heathen races must often have supplied the travelled and pious Jew with a theme for wonder and reflection. Nor can *we* compare, for instance, the Greeks of the ancient heathen world, or even their purest moralists, or their most virtuous and noble men, with men of our own time, and not be struck by the radical difference in their moral attitude and tone. To the ancient Greek

the world was very fair, human life very beautiful, and full of enjoyment. There was nothing mystic, yearning, unsatisfied in his nature. He had discovered attainable ideals, and was content both with them and with himself. The sense of moral imperfection, of sin, was almost unknown to him. He did not know, even Socrates did not know, as Carlyle reminds us, that "there is no sin so damning as that same supercilious unconsciousness of sin." It was because their moral standard was in many respects so low as to permit their very best men to be guilty of acts which we cannot so much as name, that they were so easily satisfied—self-satisfied—content with themselves and their conditions, their aims and their achievements. Whereas the Christian of modern days, in proportion as he has the spirit of his Master, is dissatisfied with himself and with the moral conditions of men; he is for ever seeking and demanding something higher, nobler, more perfect: while the Greek stands gracefully at ease, in smiling self-content, the Christian is for ever straining forward to that which is before, confessing that he has not yet attained, that he is far from being perfect. And this amazing difference is purely due to the fact that the one has a Divine Law and a Divine Example before and above him, such as it never entered the heart of the other to conceive,—a perfect Law and an Example of all perfection. Therefore it is that he is dissatisfied, ill at ease; that he frets and strains at the hindrances and limitations which render his best deeds and endeavours imperfect; that he aspires toward another and a better life in which he may enter, through a per-

fect obedience, into a perfect and Divine content. If he says of himself, and of man, and of human life, "I have seen an end of all perfection," it is because, turning to God, he can add: "*for* thy commandment is exceeding broad."

But we may read the verse in another way, and still derive comfort and encouragement from it. We may say: "I have seen an end of all perfection in myself, and in the world; *but* thy commandment is exceeding broad: *that* is perfect, though *I* am imperfect, and in its perfection I find the promise of my own." For shall God give a law for human life, and that law remain for ever unfulfilled? Impossible! "The gifts of God are without repentance"—irreversible, never to be lessened or withdrawn. His purpose is not to be made of none effect by our weaknesses and sins. In the Law He has shewn us what He would have us be. And shall we never become what he would have us to be? Can the Law remain for ever without any life that corresponds to it and fulfils it? Nay, God will never take back the fair and perfect ideal of human life depicted in his Law, never retract his purpose to raise the life of man till it touches and fulfils that ideal. And so the very Law which is our despair is our comfort also, for if *that* be perfect *we* must become perfect; its perfection is the pledge of ours.

Nor have we only the comfort of a perfect Law. We have also the still greater comfort of a perfect Example—the example of Him who fulfilled all the righteousness of the Law, both for Himself and for us, that He might fulfil it *in* us. Besides "the broad commandment" we have "the Man in whom

was no sin," the Man whose perfection guarantees ours, if only we trust in Him and follow Him.

If, then, we must say with the Psalmist, "I have seen an end of all perfection, for thy commandment is exceeding broad;" we may also say, "I have seen that perfect law incarnated in the perfect life of Him who is my life; and therefore I know that, imperfect as I am in myself, I shall yet become perfect in Him."

THE BOOK OF JOB.

III.—THE FIRST COLLOQUY. (CHAPTERS IV.—XIV.)

(I) ELIPHAZ TO JOB. (CHAPTERS IV. AND V.)

AT this point we pass into the Poem proper. It opens with three colloquies between Job and his Friends. In form these colloquies closely resemble each other. Each of the three Friends speaks in each of them ; Eliphaz first, then Bildad, then Zophar—save in the last colloquy, when Zophar, having nothing more to say, wisely holds his peace: and each of the three is separately answered by Job. But while similar in form, in spirit they differ widely. At the outset the Friends are content to hint their doubts of Job, their suspicion that he has fallen into some secret and heinous sin, in general or ambiguous terms ; but, as the argument rolls on, they are irritated by the boldness with which he rebuts their charges and asserts his integrity, and grow ever more candid, and harsh, and angry in their denunciation of his guilt. With fine truth to nature the Poet depicts Job as passing through an entirely opposite process. At first, while they content themselves with hints and “ambiguous givings-out,” with insinuating in general terms that he must have sinned, and set themselves to win him to confession and repentance, he is exasperated beyond all endur-

ance, and challenges the justice both of man and of God ; for it is these general charges, these covert and undefined insinuations of some "occulted guilt," which, because it is impossible to meet them, most of all vex and perturb the soul. But as, in their rising anger, they exchange ambiguous hints for open definite charges, by a fine natural revulsion Job grows even more calm and reasonable : for definite charges can be definitely met : why, then, should he any longer vex and distress his spirit ? More and more he turns away from the loud foolish outcries of his Friends, and addresses himself to God even when he seems to speak to them. So often as we listen to him, indeed, we must remember that the great controversy is not between him and them, but between him and God. God is even more in his thoughts than they are ; and even while answering them he is really expostulating with God.

There is more logic in his replies to his three interlocutors than we commonly suppose ; but a logical refutation of their arguments is by no means Job's first aim. What really dominates and engrosses him is the desire to see "the end of the Lord" in so terribly mishandling him. If we would do justice to Job we must steadfastly bear in mind, then, that behind the three antagonists whom he could see and hear, and who were only too ready to speak, there stood an invisible Opponent who remained obstinately dumb to his most impassioned expostulations and outcries, and from whom he was throughout seeking to compel a response. And, on the other hand, if we would do justice to the Friends, we must remember that, in declaring the doom of

the wicked—and on this point they ring an endless series of changes—they had Job in their eye even when they did not choose to name him ; that, on the whole and in the main, what they affirm of the retributions which dog the steps of guilt is true ; their mistake being that, in the teeth of all the facts of the case, they assume the guilt of Job, having indeed no other basis for their assumption than the logical fallacy, that since the wicked suffer, therefore all who suffer are wicked.

The dogmatic prepossessions of the three Friends, which shape and penetrate all they say, may be reduced to three. First and chiefly, God is just : and therefore the good and ill of human life must be exactly apportioned to demerit and desert—good coming to the good, and evil to the evil. Secondly—and this is a mere corollary of the first : the extraordinary evils which have accumulated on you, Job, prove that *you* must have been guilty of some exceptional and enormous sin, hidden from men perhaps, but known to and avenged by God. Thirdly—and this was the conclusion to which they were fain to lead him : if you will confess your sin and humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, He will forgive your sin, cleanse you from all unrighteousness, and restore to you the open marks of his goodwill.

In the First Colloquy these dogmas are stated with a certain gentleness and consideration. The Friends disappoint us, indeed, by their lack of sympathy in the sorrows of Job ; we find little of that tenderness in them which we have a right to

expect from his chosen friends, friends, too, who have travelled far in order to "condole with him and to comfort him;" but we must remember that they too had been grievously disappointed, shocked even. If, when Job opened his mouth, instead of cursing his day and reproaching God with having hidden his path, he had broken out into a penitent confession of sin, or even into a passionate lamentation over his sorrows, his Friends might have been touched to the quick; they might have "quoted him" with better heed and judgment, and have spent themselves in endeavours to console him. But when, instead of acting up to their conception of him and of what was becoming in him, he seemed to brave the wrath of Heaven, and to accuse God Himself of injustice in afflicting him, we can understand how they would feel it to be their first duty to bring him to himself, to convince him of his sin, to win him to repentance. This is what they attempt to do even in the First Colloquy. Some human pity they cannot but feel for a friend maddened with loss and grief; nevertheless they are true to their pious convictions, and let him know that, so far as they can see, he must have sinned before God afflicted him,—as very certainly he had done since, in charging God foolishly,—and beg him to acknowledge his sin. They all sing the same song, though with characteristic variations. Eliphaz begins with, "Who ever perished, being innocent? and where have the righteous been cut off? It is only those who plough iniquity and sow mischief that reap it." (Chap. iv. 7, 8.) Bildad follows with, "God does not spurn the perfect, nor take

evildoers by the hand. If thou art pure and upright, then will he wake up in thy behalf, and restore the habitation of thy righteousness." (Chap. viii. 20, 6.) And Zophar winds up with the assertion, "God knoweth evil men, and seeth iniquity when he seemeth not to regard it"—so that when men see only the punishment, God sees the sin that caused it,—and with an exhortation to him to put away "the iniquity that is in his hand." (Chap. xi. 13, 14.) How Job meets these insinuations and remonstrances, and gains a true logical victory over his Friends in this first encounter, we shall see as we pursue our study. For the present we must confine ourselves to the speech of Eliphaz.

CHAPTERS IV. AND V.

CHAP. IV. 1.—*Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite and said :*

2. *Wilt thou jaint should one venture a word with thee ?*

But who can refrain from speaking ?

3. *Lo, thou hast admonished many,*

And hast strengthened many languid hands ;

4. *Thy words have upholden him that stumbled,*

And reknit the sinking knees :

5. *But now it has come upon thee, and thou faintest ;*

It toucheth thee home, and thou art dismayed.

6. *Should not thy piety be thy confidence,*

And as for thy hope, should it not be in the uprightness of thy ways ?

7. *Bethink thee, now : who ever perished, being innocent,*

And where have the upright been cut off ?

8. *As I have seen, they who plow iniquity*

And sow mischief, reap it ;

9. *At the breath of God they perish,*

At the blast of his nostrils are they consumed :

10. *The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the swarthy lion,*

And the teeth of the young lion, are broken ;

11. *The strong lion roameth for lack of prey,*

And the whelps of the lioness are scattered abroad.

12. *Now an oracle stole on me in secret,
And mine ear caught its whisper.*
13. *Amid thoughts, from visions of the night,
When deep sleep falleth on men,*
14. *A fear came on me, and trembling
Which made all my bones to quake.*
15. *Then a wind swept over my face,
The hair of my head bristled up.*
16. *There It stood ; but its form I could not discern :
A Shape was before mine eyes :
A gentle murmur—and I heard a voice !—*
17. *' Shall mortal man be more just than God ?
Shall a man be more pure than his Maker ?*
18. *Behold, He trusteth not his ministers,
And chargeth his angels with frailty :*
19. *How much more those who dwell in houses of clay,
Whose origin is in the dust,
Who are sooner crushed than the moth ?*
20. *From dawn to dusk are they cut off,
They are ever perishing unheeded,*
- 21 *They die, but not in wisdom !'*

CHAP. V. 1—*Plead now : is there any who will respond to thee ?
And to which of the Holy Ones wilt thou turn ?*

2. *Nay, passion will slay the impious,
And indignation destroy the foolish.*
3. *I myself have seen a fool taking root,
But on the instant I cursed his habitation :—*
4. *' His children shall be far from succour ;
They shall crush each other in the gate,
With none to deliver :*
5. *While the starveling shall eat his harvest,
And snatch it even from within a hedge of thorns,
And the snare shall gape for their substance.'*
6. *For calamity cometh not forth from the dust,
Nor doth trouble spring out of the ground ;
But man is born to trouble
As the sparks fly upward.*
8. *But I, I would have recourse unto God,
And to God would I make my appeal,
Who doeth great things past finding out,
And wonders that cannot be numbered ;*

10. *Who giveth rain upon the face of the earth,
And causeth water-springs to flow over the fields :*
11. *Setting those that be low on high,
And lifting up them that are cast down ;*
12. *Frustrating the devices of the crafty,
So that their hands do nothing to purpose ;*
13. *Catching the crafty in their craft,
So that the counsel of the subtile becometh foolhardy,*
14. *And in the daytime they fumble in darkness,
And in the blaze of noon they grope as if it were night :—*
15. *Thus He saveth the poor from the sword of their mouth,
And the needy from the hand of their violence,*
16. *So that hope ariseth on the feeble,
And iniquity closeth her mouth.*
17. *Lo, happy is the man whom God correct eth !
Therefore spurn not thou the chastening of the Almighty :*
18. *For He maketh sore, yet bindeth up,
He bruisseth, but his hands make whole ;*
19. *In six troubles will He deliver thee,
Nor in seven shall evil touch thee ;*
20. *In famine He will ransom thee from death,
And in war from the stroke of the sword ;*
21. *When the tongue scourgeth thou shalt be hid,
Nor shalt thou fear when destruction cometh ;*
22. *Thou shalt laugh at destruction and famine,
Nor fear the wild beasts of the field ;*
23. *For even with the stones of the field shalt thou be in league,
And the wild beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee,*
24. *So that thou shalt know that it is well with thy tent,
And shalt muster thy cattle and miss none :*
25. *Thou shalt know also that thy seed will be many,
And thine offspring like the grass of the land :*
26. *Thou shalt go to the grave in a ripe old age,
As the shock of corn is carried in in its season.*
27. *Lo, this we have sought out ; it is even thus :
Hear it, and know it, for thy good.*

As the oldest and wisest of the Three, Eliphaz speaks first. He gives by far the noblest, gentlest, and most artistic expression to the convictions

and sentiments which were common to them all. Admitting the sincere piety of Job (Chap. iv. 2-6), he nevertheless affirms that the good and ill of life are proportioned to the deserts of men (Chap. iv. 7-11), and intimates that, even if Job has fallen into no conscious sin, he inherits a sinful and imperfect nature (Chap. iv. 12-21); and that, therefore, instead of yielding to anger and passion (Chap. v. 1-5), since all calamity proceeds from the hand of God, and all deliverance, he should humble himself under that Hand, confess his sin, and sue for mercy (Chap. v. 6-16). Should he take his chastening in that spirit, it will prove to be but a correction designed to conduct him to a more confirmed piety and a larger happiness (Chap. v. 17-27).

Some commentators find much that is harsh and unfeeling in the opening address of Eliphaz; they describe it as "haughty, cold, and heartless;" but I confess I do not see how the theology of that age—a theology, be it remembered, in which Job himself believed as devoutly as his Friends—could well have been stated and applied with more delicacy and consideration. It is not of anything in the speech, I think, that we can fairly complain, but of that which is not in it. In the presence of so great a misery, a little sympathy would have been worth a good deal of theology. Had Eliphaz, seeing how terribly Job was changed by his great "fight of affliction," inso-much that

"nor the exterior nor the inward man
Resembled that it was;"

had he, when he found him even more sadly and terribly changed than it had entered his heart to

conceive, insomuch that, when he looked on him, "he knew him not," given free expression to his dismay and grief; had he cried out,

"I would not take this from report; it *is*,
And my heart breaks at it;"

had he even, when he heard Job invoke curses on the day that gave him birth, paused to consider what it was that put his friend so much from the understanding of himself, his thoughtful and tender sympathy might have saved Job from many a pang. It was not friendly of him to fall at once to *moralizing* on Job's condition instead of seeking to assuage his grief; nor was it friendly of him to pass by, without a word of recognition, the piety, the heroic resignation, which Job had shewn under his earlier afflictions in order that he might rebuke the impatience and despair of "the curse" which had at last been wrung from his anguish. But, with this exception, there is little to censure, in the speech of Eliphaz, much to commend and admire; if he *must* moralize rather than sympathize, it is hard to see how his moralizing could have been more gently done.

He opens (Chap. iv. 2) with an apology for so much as speaking at all to one in such violent and overwhelming distress of spirit. Nothing but a sense of duty to God—nay, even to Job himself—induced him to venture on admonishing him.

But (verses 3-5), if he may venture to speak, he cannot but express his wonder and regret that a man so wise, of such admirable self-control, who has himself comforted so many stricken souls, and given strength to so many that were weak, should lose his

composure and be dismayed now that he himself has to bear chastisement.

It is very unjust to Eliphaz to assume a tone of sarcasm in his words ; to conceive of him as implying, "It was much easier for you to speak patience than it is to shew it," as though he thought Job one of those who

"Can counsel and speak comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel ; but, tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion."

It is more reasonable, as well as more just, to assume that he was honestly surprised and concerned to find one who had habitually shewn so much insight into the purpose and function of suffering, who had been able so to bring out the sweet uses of adversity as to carry consolation and strength to many fainting hearts, unable any longer to "make a push at chance and sufferance" for himself.

It is equally unreasonable and unfair to import a sinister meaning into the argument of Verses 6-9 ; to take them as conveying, "The innocent never perish ; you are perishing : and therefore you are not innocent." The aim of Eliphaz is to rebuke the impatience of Job, to win him to submission. And, therefore, his argument here is:—The pious and upright are never cut off ; you are pious and upright : why so downcast and despairing, then ? why do you not make your piety your confidence ? and as for your hope, for which you think you no longer have any ground, here is solid ground for it—in the uprightness of your ways. To strengthen his argument (1) he states it both in a positive and in a negative form, and (2) both appeals to Job's experi-

ence and adduces his own. (1) The upright do *not* perish; the wicked *do* perish. (2) Have *you* ever seen an upright man perish? As for me, *I* have often seen the wicked perish.

The phrase "they who plow iniquity" (in verse 8) is an abbreviated and incomplete expression for "they who plow in the field of unrighteousness;" and the whole verse expresses the inevitable result of an evil life in a proverbial and picturesque form which is of frequent recurrence in Holy Writ.¹ Verse 9 is exegetical of verse 8. It defines *what* they reap who plough in the field of iniquity and sow mischief in it, viz. destruction: "they perish," "they are consumed;" and it affirms that this connection of destruction with iniquity is not only a law enacted by God, but also a law executed by God:

*"They perish at the breath of God,
At the blast of his nostrils are they consumed."*

Verses 10 and 11, which often perplex the simple, who cannot see by what law of association the "lions" are brought in here, are a new and elaborate illustration of the sentiment expressed in Verses 8 and 9. The lion is frequently used in the Old Testament, and notably in the Hebrew poetry of this period (Psas. xxii. 14; xxxiv. 11; xxxv. 17), as an image of the sinner, especially when the sinner is in great power and abuses it. He is so used here. Under this familiar and carefully wrought out figure, Eliphaz asserts that wickedness, in every stage of its development, and markedly when it is cruel and despotic, conducts to ruin and destruction. Even

¹ Comp. Prov. xxii. 8; Hosea viii. 7; and Galatians vi. 7, 8.

the greatest and most potent sinners, here represented by the most formidable of beasts, perish before the Divine anger.

The Verses are still more remarkable on another ground. In the Original five different words are used for the lion, indicative of the several stages of his growth, which we are obliged to render with such epithets as "*young* lion," "*swarthy* lion," &c., in order to convey the meaning of the Hebrew substantives. Obviously the Poet has set himself the task of including all these five names in his verse, just as some of the Psalmists set themselves the more difficult task of using the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet as the initial letters of the successive verses in their psalms. And this is but the first example of many similar artistic feats which our Poet took delight in accomplishing. As we proceed, we shall meet them again and again.

In Verses 12-21 we have the most ancient, the finest and most impressive, description of a spiritual apparition ever penned. We can well believe that Eliphaz recited it "with solemn tone and sinking voice." The details of the scene are marvellously selected and combined with a view to produce in the reader that profound sense of awe and terror occasioned by immediate contact with the invisible world. It was in the dead hour of midnight, when the wakeful and reflective soul turns to the loftiest themes of meditation, that Eliphaz was brooding over the apparent inequalities of human life, and searching for a vindication of them. He had slept and dreamed; deep "thoughts"—"*dubitations*"—had been excited in him by visions of the night;

and as his mind wandered "in endless mazes lost," that vague terror fell on him, that shuddering presentiment of a more than mortal presence near or at hand, which most of us have felt at times, and which is the most thrilling and paralyzing experience known to men. Then "a wind swept over his face," that terrible chill which turns even the firmest strength to utter weakness;¹ "each particular hair" of his head shivered, "stiffened," bristled up as though recognizing an unearthly visitant; and he became aware, as he lay trembling on his couch, of a spiritual Presence. The terms in which he describes it are the most vague and indefinite, the impersonal touches of the description being wonderfully impressive:

"There *It* stood : but its form I could not define ;
A Shape was before mine eyes ;
 A gentle murmur : a lull : and I heard a Voice."

Nothing could be finer than this Form which yet form had none, which remained shapeless and undistinguishable, not to be resolved into distinct features by any straining of the eye or the mind, and this small still voice, audible indeed, but audible only to the inner sense. And, no doubt, it suggested one of the finest passages in Milton's description of Death:

"If shape it could be called that shape had none
 Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb ;
 Or substance might be called that shadow seemed."

The Spirit so grandly described brings an answer to the question which had kept the soul of Eliphaz waking, viz., What mean the inequalities of human

¹ Among the ancients, a cold wind was a recognized adjunct of a supernatural visitation.

life? and, especially, why do the good suffer like other men? But the only answer It has to give is, that every man is sinful by nature, has evil in him, however it may be veiled and controlled and subdued; so that no man can be just and pure before his Maker. Much less can he be *more* just than God, although he affects to be so when he arraigns the providence of God, and assumes that *he* would have made a more equal distribution of the good and ill of human life. Even the angels are not wholly free from frailty;² God, who alone is absolutely pure, can see possibilities of imperfection even in them, so that He cannot commit Himself to them. How much less, then, can men be pure and perfect in his sight—men who “dwell in houses of clay,” who are related to the dust from which they spring, and who, by their “clay” are laid open to all the evils of flesh and earth? These poor *ephemeræ*, whose life is but a day, or a few hours of the day, who perish momentarily in the stream from which they rise, and who yet sport out their brief span as though they were to live for ever, what are these as compared with the almighty and eternal Lord?

The last sentence (verse 21) of this oracular utterance has been variously interpreted. Conant, Davidson, and many more, render it,—

“Is not their *excellency* taken away?”

but Gesenius, Delitzsch, with other great critics, prefer the rendering,—

“Is not their *tent-cord* taken away?”

² “Frailty,” that is, the liability to err. The Hebrew word is used nowhere else, and, as Dillmann has shewn, is probably derived from an Æthiopic root.

Read thus, the thought seems to be that when the soul, which holds up and sustains the body, as the cord holds up the tent, is required of men, they perish ; but "not in wisdom," since, like the ephemerids, they have taken no thought of the frailty and perishableness of their nature, the brevity of their span.

On the whole we may say of this graphically described vision that "Eliphaz seems to represent himself, and doubtless with truth, as having been once beset by doubts which were cleared up by a revelation so dim and mysterious in its form as to be scarcely distinguishable from the inner movements of his consciousness." And, doubtless, he cited this oracle, not simply because it was one of the most memorable and impressive facts in his experience, but partly because he was a man of the prophetic order, to whom visions and revelations from Heaven were a surer testimony than any discourse of reason ; and, still more, because he thought that, in his assumption of integrity, Job was forgetting how frail and sinful he was by nature, and wished to put him in remembrance of it. At the same time there is an obvious delicacy in the manner and spirit of his admonition. Instead of launching a direct admonition against Job, he recounts the vision in which the frailty of universal man had been so solemnly impressed on his mind, and implies that even if Job had fallen into some secret sin, he had but shewn a weakness common to all who "wear flesh about them."

Like one who was conversant with the secrets

of the spiritual world, Eliphaz follows up the words of the oracle (in Chap. v. 1) by adjuring Job to appeal to any of the spirits, or angels, around the throne of God, and see for himself whether they will respond to his appeal and espouse his cause.

It may be feared that Job was not so profoundly impressed by the oracle, or vision, as Eliphaz expected him to be. For here (at verse 2) something in his manner seems to arrest the attention of Eliphaz,—to change and irritate the current of his thoughts. It may be that Job indulged himself in some passionate despairing gesture at this point. It may be that he meant nothing more by his gesture than to express his entire agreement with the affirmation that none of the angels would be at all likely to take his part against God; or to intimate that he was by no means craving an impossible victory over God, but to understand Him and be reconciled to Him. Whatever he meant, Eliphaz seems to have misconceived him, and to have taken the interruption in dudgeon; for, with a sudden break in the sequence of his thoughts, he exclaims: "Nay, do not give way to passion and indignation, as the wicked do; for I have seen them, and marked both their course and their end." And then (in verses 3-5) he proceeds to depict a fool, a moral fool, *i.e.* the sort of fool who says in his heart, "There is no God"—a fool whom he once saw; and to describe how, the moment he apprehended what the man was, he was able to predict his fate. Verses 4 and 5 probably give the *ipssissima verba* of this prediction or curse. What Eliphaz foresaw was that the fool though for the moment in great prosperity

and spreading himself like a green bay-tree, would come to sudden and utter ruin; his children, unsuccoured by friend or kinsman, would "*crush each other in the gate,*" i.e., ruin one another by feuds and suits brought before the judges who sat in the gate of the city; his homestead would be deserted, his property unprotected, so that the famished starvelings who prowled about it, emboldened by so many signs of neglect and ruin, would venture to break through the hedge of thorns that defended the stacks, and carry off whatever they cared to take. All the wealth of the fool and his family would suddenly disappear, as though some huge trap, which had long gaped for it, had swallowed it in an instant.¹

At Verse 6 Eliphaz resumes, and in a milder tone, the general course of his argument, working up into it, however, the little episode of Verses 2-5. He had been arguing that man is by nature frail and sinful, and that therefore Job should humble himself before God, instead of proudly asserting his integrity. And, now, he once more affirms that there is that "born" in man which exposes him to the "trouble" which is the invariable result of sin, the appointed discipline of a weak and sinful nature. But he does not forget and drop the fool whom, and whose end, he once saw. All that sudden

¹ Verse 5, "And *the snare* shall gape for their substance." Umbreit and Ewald prefer the rendering of the Ancient Version, "*The thirsty* shall snatch at their substance." And "*the thirsty*" makes so good an apposition with "*the starveling*" of the previous line, that one would like to retain it. It is impossible, however, to do so without substituting mere conjecture for criticism, without altering the pointing of the Hebrew, without what Professor Davidson calls "*violent vocalic changes*" in the teeth of all authority.

ruin which befell him was to have been expected, implies Eliphaz ; for trouble is the consequence of sin, and if men will sin they must take the consequence. So that both his lines of thought coalesce in this Verse, which throws one of the common and Divine facts of life into a proverbial form. Misfortune, he says, is not a weed springing at haphazard from the soil of life ; it is part of the Divine order of the world. It is just as truly in the natural order of things (verse 7) as that sparks—literally, "*the sons of fire*"—should spring upward. Again we may note the apologetic tone of this pious Temanite. He believes that Job's sufferings spring from his sins, conscious or unconscious ; but he admits the universal tendency of human nature to such sins, its universal liability, therefore, to such sufferings. So far from wishing, at least for the present, to make Job out a sinner above other men, he endeavours so to set forth the sinfulness of all other men as to make it easy for Job to confess his sins and seek the Divine forgiveness.

This is the course which he himself would take were his soul in the stead of Job's, as he tells us in Verses 8-16. Job's only direct reference to God had been a complaint (Chap. iii. 23) that God had fenced him in so that he could find no outlet for his thoughts or his activities. "*That,*" responds Eliphaz, "is not the right attitude for the sufferer to assume toward God ; it is not the course that I myself would take." God is not only just, but kind ; and therefore, instead of impugning his justice, the afflicted should appeal to his compassion. The character of God is to be inferred from all forms

of his activity, and, notably, from his doings in the inanimate world of nature and in the world of animate and reasonable men. In the natural world He doeth things great and inscrutable, wonders past finding out: sending rain, for example—rain being the chief of blessings, and the type of all other blessings to an Oriental mind. In this material sphere his way is manifold, complex, mysterious; but it all tends to a single end, viz., “to set up on high them that be low and to lift up them that are cast down” (verses 9-11). In the human world the energy of God has to contend with the passions, the cunning devices, the follies and foolhardy oppositions of men; but here also his various lines of action converge on one point, viz., to bring help to the feeble and to stop the mouth of iniquity (verses 12-16).

The right attitude of the sufferer toward God (verses 17-27) is, therefore, one of grateful acquiescence. Since the whole course of his providence is designed to save the poor and the afflicted, since, moreover, the design of affliction itself is to quicken in them a sense of sins of which they were before unconscious, and to lead them to a more complete fellowship with Him, “happy is the man whom God correcteth.” God has no pleasure in afflicting the children of men. He only wounds that He may heal, only exposes them to dangers which they cannot confront alone that, feeling their need of Him, they may run into Him and be safe. The man who is at one with Him—and suffering tends to bring us to Him and unite us with Him—will find all things working together for his good, all the

forces of Nature enlisted on his side, even to the stones of the field which obstruct the plough, and the wild beasts which harry the flocks and herds.¹ If Job will but take this attitude toward God, all his outward and painful conditions will be reversed ; instead of lying homeless, childless, stripped, dying, on the *mezbele*, he shall abide securely in his tent, with flocks undiminished, his offspring numerous and flourishing as the grass of the land, and shall only go to his grave in a ripe old age, "frosty, but kindly."

There is only one allusion in these Verses which calls for explanation. In Verse 26, "the shock of corn carried *in*," is, literally, "the shock of corn carried *up* ;" the Hebrew verb points to the *raising* of the sheaves on to the lofty threshing-floor, which marks the close of harvest. On this verse Canon Cook quotes for comparison the noble lines from "Paradise Lost" (xi.) :

" So mayest thou live, till, like ripe fruits, thou drop
Into thy mother's lap ; or be with ease
Gathered, not harshly plucked ; for death mature."

These, then, are the general truths and convictions which Eliphaz would have Job apply to his

¹ The sentiment of verse 23 sounds like an extravagant hyperbole to many readers. How natural it nevertheless is, and consonant even to the reason of man, may be seen by a careful study of any of our greater poets. It is to be found, for example, in one of our most recent poems,—Mr. Swinburne's "Erechtheus." In the fine lines put into the lips of the goddess Athene, we read :

Time and change,
Masters and lords of all men, shall be made
To thee that knowest no master and no lord
Servants ; *the days that lighten heaven and nights*
That darken shall be ministers of thine,
To attend upon thy glory."

own case. And when we have carefully considered them we shall find in them, I think, no coldness, no sarcasm; no heartless attempt to censure and condemn Job, but a genuine endeavour to "admonish" him, as he himself had admonished many (Chap. iv. 3, 4), to strengthen his languid hands and to reknit his sinking knees.

S. COX.

THE SIXTEENTH PSALM.

THIS Psalm has several very difficult and disputed passages, which cannot be exhaustively discussed without the use of a learned apparatus more proper to a critical commentary than to the pages of this magazine. I confine myself, therefore, in the main, to an attempt to trace out the train of thought, and to illustrate the Psalmist's argument by comparison and contrast with other views set forth in the Old Testament. In points of grammar, I must ask the reader to take some things for granted, or to verify them for himself.

The title of the Psalm is too obscure and of too little authority to be taken as the starting-point of our exegesis. The word *michtam* is probably a musical term; and, at any rate, all such interpretations as "a golden psalm," "an inscription, epitaph, or epigrammatic poem," "an unpublished poem," are devoid of proof and probability. The words "of David" are also no sure guide. They perhaps imply that the collectors of the Psalter derived this psalm from an earlier collection of "Psalms of David and other Poems;" but they certainly cannot

be taken as authoritative. The Psalm must be allowed to speak entirely for itself.

The Psalmist begins with a prayer and a plea :

Verse 1.—Preserve me, O God, for I have committed myself to thee.

The Hebrew verb which the Authorized Version renders, "in thee do I *put my trust*," does not indicate a subjective frame of mind, an attitude of trust and expectancy, but an objective relation of the Psalmist to God as his King and Protector. In a non-religious sense the word is used of a vassal who attaches himself to a suzerain in order to enjoy his protection. (Judges ix. 15; Isa. xxx. 2.) So the religious use of the term rests on the theocratic conception of God's covenant with his people. The Psalmist does not rest on the vague plea of modern subjectivity—"Save me, for I believe, and trust that Thou wilt save me." Nor, on the other hand, does he plead any merit toward God to be recompensed by help in his present necessity. He pleads a covenant relation to God. He is Jehovah's vassal, and his King is identified with his cause, so that he can claim with confidence the help and protection to which the honour of God's name is pledged in virtue of his grace and truth. Thus the plea of our verse, and of such parallel passages as Psa. vii. 1; xxxi. 1; lxxi. 1; cxli. 8, is essentially one with the plea, "for thy name's sake" (Psa. xxv. 11; xxxi. 3); "for the glory of thy name" (Psa. lxxix. 9). This is the form which appropriating faith takes in the Old Testament. Resting on the historical covenant of God with Israel, on the fact that Jehovah has chosen a people for Himself upon earth, the Psalmists

claim the benefits of this covenant grace in the consciousness that, with integrity of heart, they commit themselves to God in loyal obedience. This act of faith resting on the covenant is indivisible from a loyal acceptance of the sovereignty of God's will as expressed in the covenant law. (Psa. xvii. xxvi.)

*Verses 2, 3.—I say of Jehovah, "Thou art my Lord;
My weal is not beyond Thee :"
Of the saints that are in the land,
"They are the nobles, in whom is all my delight."*

The italics of the English version, *O my soul*, rest on a mere Rabbinical conceit, and are unnecessary if for *thou hast said* we substitute *I say*, which is quite admissible grammatically. The second half of verse 2 is more puzzling. The Authorized Version has followed a Jewish commentator, the elder Kimchi; and the Prayer-book Version, which agrees with the Septuagint and Vulgate, is not very different in its general sense. But a rendering more suitable to the context was adopted by some of the best ancient interpreters, who express the sense, "My weal is not apart from thee." Grammatical precision demands a slight modification of this view. Taken quite literally, the Psalmist's words are, "My weal is not additional to thee." Not merely is God the source of all his weal, but everything which he recognizes as a true good, God actually contains within Himself. (Cf. Psa. lxxiii. 25.)

In the third verse the Hebrew text appears to have suffered a slight corruption. The Authorized Version ignores a small but important word (מה), which can hardly be assumed to be a mere pleonasm.

The only commentator, I believe, who has give an altogether easy grammatical rendering of the Hebrew text as it stands is Hitzig, and he has succeeded only by a hypothesis as to the occasion and general scope of the psalm, in which no one has been bold enough to follow him. Hitzig supposes that the Psalm was written by David to accompany the gifts taken from the spoil of Amalek which he distributed to the elders of Judah. (1 Sam. xxx.) The verse may then be rendered, "These [gifts I dedicate] to the saints in the land, even the nobles," &c.

But while the verse as it stands is hopelessly puzzling, the omission of a single letter. (י, = *and*, after *earth*) gives an excellent sense, and to this critical remedy, which perhaps has some countenance from the old Versions, several of the most cautious commentators have betaken themselves. He who seeks his sole good in God can value men only in their relation to Jehovah, but to those who are God's people he will cling with hearty love. This is the sense of the Psalmist's assertion that the "holy in the land" are in his eyes "noble," invested with reverend dignity, and at the same time objects of his delight. (Cf. *Psa. xv. 4.*)

*Verse 4.—Many are their sorrows who purchase other gods.
 Their drink offerings of blood will I not offer,
 Nor take their names upon my lips.*

The rendering *hasten* given in the Authorized Version implies a change of pointing. The verb means properly to "acquire by barter," and those Israelites are meant who have given up Jehovah

in exchange for false gods. (Cf. Jer. ii. 11.) The unhappiness of those who forsake the true God appears here as the necessary converse of the assurance of perfect weal and blessedness in Jehovah. That the singer has in his eye an actual class of his countrymen who had exchanged the all-sufficient God for vain idols is plain. But the assurance that their lot is a lot of many sorrows is not drawn from experience. The tone in which the singer protests that he will have no share in their worship seems rather to imply that they were then in the ascendant, so that a strong temptation to join them was held forth to the man who could not oppose to their seductions the certainties of fellowship with the living God. But to him who has tasted the fulness of joys that is found in the presence of Jehovah (verse 11) it is an inevitable inference that divorce from God must mean abundance of sorrows. And as the contemplation of God as his perfect weal led the Psalmist in verse 3 to express his loving attachment to God's people, so, in a manner strictly parallel, contemplation of the false gods as the principle (if we may so express it) of infinite sorrow leads at once to a burst of aversion from them and their worshippers :

*I will not pour out their bloody libations,
Nor will I take their names upon my lips.*

This parallelism is most sharply brought out if we suppose, as is otherwise natural, that *their* libations and *their* names mean the libations which the idolaters pour out and the names which they bear on their lips. In Semitic antiquity the very name of a god included a predication of his power, dignity, or vir-

tues ; so that even to utter such names as Baal and Molech, that is, *Lord* and *King*, was an act of homage. Hence the precept in Exodus xxiii. 13 (comp. Hosea ii. 17 ; Zech. xiii. 2), and hence, too, the substitution by later historians of Bosheth, *shameful thing*, for Baal, *Lord*, even in proper names.

The name of a god is of course mainly uttered in prayer, in praise, or in oaths. A more formal act of worship is specified as the pouring out of bloody libations. In the Levitical ritual libations had a very subordinate place, but in the idolatrous worship practised in Israel the drink-offering must have had higher importance, as appears from many references in the Prophets. In particular, libations and incense offered on the house tops formed a frequent feature of domestic idolatry, especially of star worship. (Jer. xix. 13 ; xxxii. 29 ; xlv. 17, 18.) The libation was supposed to be actually drunk by the gods (Deut. xxxii. 38), and thus the expression might easily be extended to include the blood of sacrifices, which even in the worship of Jehovah were poured out almost exactly in the same way as libations of wine (cf. Lev. iv. 7 with Sirach l. 15), and was supposed by unenlightened worshippers to be the drink of the deity (Psa. l. 13). It is natural therefore to suppose that libations of sacrificial blood are the offerings here alluded to. But the Psalmist clearly desires to indicate that the bloody offerings in question are in their own nature hideous, marking the worship to which they pertain as detestable. A libation of ordinary animal blood could hardly appear in this light to a Hebrew accustomed to the legal operations with the blood of sacrifices. Nor does it seem

legitimate to suppose, as some commentators have done, that in the Heathen rites alluded to part of the bloody libation was drunk by the worshippers. The natural explanation is to take *blood* in the sense of *human blood* (Hos. vi. 8 ; Isa. lix. 3). The allusion is to such cruel religions as those of Molech and Chemosh, and the Psalmist gathers up in a single phrase the full horror of a faith which recognized such hideous offerings.

In the first four verses of the Psalm the singer has laid down in general terms the principle of his trust in God and his welfare in Him, deducing the relation to the saints on the one hand and the heathen Israelites on the other which this principle involves. In what follows he returns to his personal relation to God, which he develops in various directions and with great richness and depth.

*Verse 5.—Jehovah is the portion of my share and of my cup.
Thou holdest my lot in thy hand.*

The words which are here translated by *portion* and *share* represent respectively a share viewed as a thing measured out and a share assigned by lot (*helek*). The former is frequently used of a portion of food, the latter of a share of spoil or of land—the conquered land of Canaan having been divided by lot. Here, however, we are not to seek a metaphor taken from the usage of either word when standing alone. According to a common Hebrew idiom *the portion of my allotment* means simply the portion allotted to me—*my allotted share*. But a share must be a share of something, and this is indicated by adding *and of my cup*. The sense is, Jehovah is the portion which by

lot has been assigned to me to satisfy my thirst. All the desires and necessities of man's higher life are naturally represented by hunger and thirst, but especially by thirst, as the keener and subtler appetite. Thus we read of a thirst for God's word (Amos viii. 11, 12); but especially the longing of the soul for personal communion with God is spoken of as the thirsting of the soul for the living God. (Psa. xli. 2.) Conversely the joys of this fellowship are "a river of delights" flowing from the fountain of life which is with God, and from which He gives his people to drink. (Psa. xxxvi. 8, 9.) Or, since all these delights are summed up in Him who is Himself the fountain of living waters (Jer. ii. 13), God in Himself is the portion of the believer's cup. What now is added to this idea when we are told that Jehovah as the believer's portion—that is, Jehovah when He presents Himself to man as the satisfaction of all his needs—is a "portion assigned by lot"? Clearly the essence of distribution by lot is that the recipient does not choose for himself. What he receives is determined, not by chance, for that is not at all the Hebrew idea of a lot, but by a higher and Divine destiny. The notion, therefore, as Ewald rightly suggests, is that of prevenient grace. That this idea is not arbitrarily read into the passage appears more clearly from the epithet Portion (*helek*, *allotted* portion) of Jacob applied to Jehovah in Jeremiah x. 16. This epithet is to be understood by the aid of Deuteronomy iv. 19, where we read that God *allotted* (*hala*) the various false gods to the Gentile nations, whereas (verse 20) "you he took, and brought you out of the iron furnace to be a people appropriated

to himself." When, therefore, the individual believer in the Psalms calls God "my portion" (*helki*, Psa. cxix. 57; cxlii. 5), this is simply an application to the personal religious life of the truth, so plainly vindicated by history for the national religious life of Israel, that we did not seek and choose God, but that God has sought and chosen us.

The second half of the verse contains a very unusual grammatical form, which has received a variety of explanations. The Authorized Version has probably taken the right view of the grammatical difficulty; but it is more expressive as well as more exact to translate the verb in its primary sense—"thou holdest my lot in thy hand." The sense is not merely that God disposes (casts) the believer's lot (which would be true also of the unbeliever), but that He holds it fast, that He retains it in his hand. (So the verb is used in Prov. iv. 4.) The Psalmist's lot is not merely determined by Jehovah, but abides with Him who is Himself the portion of his people. (Cf. verse 11.) Thus the clause is in full accord with the fundamental idea of the Psalm, which throughout sets forth what God *is* to the singer, and not merely what He *does* for him. The Authorized Version loses this shade of thought.

*Verse 6.—My share hath fallen to me among joys,
Yea mine inheritance pleaseth me well.*

Literally, "Portions (measured by the line) have fallen to me," &c. The sense is obvious from what precedes. The Psalmist's portion in which he delights is not the portion in the world which Providence has assigned to him, but the share which he has obtained

among the spiritual joys of God's presence. The inheritance, in like manner, is God Himself, or his grace and fellowship.

*Verse 7.—I bless Jehovah that he giveth me counsel ;
Yea, by night my reins admonish me.*

The enjoyment and fellowship of God spoken of in the Bible is never mystical, but always moral. The Psalmist enjoys God as his portion not in a sentimental ecstasy which has nothing in common with daily life, but in the realization of Jehovah's constant presence with him as his counsellor in his duty and walk in the world. He blesses Jehovah that He giveth him counsel. How this constant guidance by God is realized is specified in the second clause of the verse. The reins are opposed to the mouth (Jer. xii. 2), as the heart to the lips (Isa. xxix. 13). Reins and heart are the region of the inmost personal life (Psa. vii. 9 ; xxvi. 2, &c.), and embrace various functions, intellectual as well as emotional, for which we have distinctive words. *Heart*, for example, stands for *conscience* (1 Sam. xxiv. 5 ; 2 Sam. xxiv. 10 ; Job xxvii. 6 ; compare 1 John iii. 20). So here the reins appear as the organ of the internal influences of God's Spirit on the believer. It is the voice of Jehovah that admonishes the Psalmist through his reins. These admonitions are given by night—in the time of quiet contemplation, when the inner voice is best heard. (Psa. iv. 4 ; lxiii. 6 ; Job iv. 13.)

*Verse 8.—I set Jehovah continually before me ;
When he is at my right hand I waver not.*

 The Psalmist, who rejoices in God as his portion,

and blesses Him for his continual guidance and counsel, necessarily makes Jehovah the constant object of his thoughts, and seeks to keep Him ever in view. And he looks to Jehovah not only as his guide but as a protector. The protector stands at the right hand of the protected (Psa. cix. 31; cxxi. 5), a figure perhaps derived from the way in which a warrior wearing a shield on his left arm would stand to protect another. (But compare also Isa. xli. 13; xlv. 1.)

*Verse 9.—Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoiceth,
Yea, also my flesh shall dwell secure.*

The translation, *My flesh shall rest in hope*, which is as old as the Septuagint, has led some Jewish and many Christian interpreters to understand this verse of the body resting after death in the hope of resurrection. But this translation is certainly false. The sense is correctly given by Calvin,—“Because God keeps our bodies as well as our souls, David is entitled to ascribe to his flesh a share in this benefit, so that it shall dwell secure.” (Cf. 1 Thess. v. 23.)

What is said in the second half of the verse appears as an inference for the future drawn from the present experience of the first half. This relation of the parts of the verse is marked by a change of tense and by the use of a strong conjunction separating the two hemistichs. The joyous certainty of security in fellowship with God is given directly and intuitively to the believer only as a relation of his soul to God. But from this it is a necessary inference of faith that the whole man shall be kept by God, that body as well as soul shall be preserved free from the

fear of evil. This inference can be avoided only by religions which regard the bodily organism as the principle of evil—the prison of the soul, fettering its nobler instincts and dulling its spiritual perceptions. With such a view the Bible has no sympathy. A religion which lays so much stress on man's vocation to lordship over the creatures (Gen. i.; Psa viii.) necessarily recognizes the bodily organism through which this vocation is realized as something more than a seat of low desires and crass senses. Not the soul, but the soul equipped with a body, constitutes man as God created him, and as He desires to restore him. The body, therefore, must share with the soul the immunity from evil which is insured by fellowship with God. So much is plain. The Psalmist's hope would not be all-sufficient if it embraced the soul and excluded the body. Carry out this thought to its just issue, and we cannot logically stop short of the doctrine of the resurrection. But we must not, therefore, hastily assume that the Psalmist's hopes took so precise a form. What we read in this Psalm is direct matter of faith not yet elaborated into formal dogma. And in studying the development of the idea in verses 10 and 11 we must be careful not to substitute a train of thought, which is easy to our New Testament standpoint, for those direct inferences of personal faith which are far more precious and fertile than those of dialectic.

The spiritual joy of the Psalmist, in his assured fellowship with God, carries with it the certainty of deliverance from bodily woe and relief from the fear of physical evil. Now, the spiritual joy in question

is essentially a positive good, while immunity of the flesh from the fear of evil is a negative thing in itself, and can appear as a positive good only when it takes the form of release from present distress and suffering. Absorbed in the enjoyment of God, the singer cannot turn aside to add, "And no ill shall assail my flesh," unless as a matter of fact his flesh is at present assailed by ills over which he rises victorious in the contemplation of his all-sufficing relation to God. And with this it agrees that in the first verse we found a prayer for preservation. The nature of the evil from which preservation is asked in verse 1, and grasped with assurance in the verse now before us, must of course remain obscure. But the thought of our verse seems most natural on the supposition that the Psalmist is exposed, not only to dangers which his faith enables him to despise, but to actual physical distress and pain, over which he rises in triumphant hope. Perhaps verse 4 justifies us in concluding that this suffering, whatever its nature, has come on the singer in connection with the divided state of Israel and the apparent prevalence of an idolatrous party. At least, his condition is such as to hold death before his eyes, and assurance of relief to his flesh is given to him only in the certainty that Jehovah will deliver his soul even from death and the grave. So he continues,—

*Verse 10.—For thou wilt not give up my soul to Sheol;
Neither wilt thou suffer thy beloved to see the pit.*

The rendering, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol," is followed by most of the Versions. But this is certainly wrong, and the Septuagint Version, quoted in Acts ii. 27, ought also in all probability to

be rendered, "Thou wilt not forsake my soul to Hades"; *i.e.*, so that it fall into the power of Hades. [Compare Psa. xxxvi. (xxxvii.) 33.—LXX.] In the second half of the verse the Versions understand *corruption*, instead of the *pit*. There are, in fact, two Hebrew words of the same form but of different origin. One is masculine, and means putrefaction or corruption (Job xvii. 14); the other is feminine, and means the *deep*, or the *pit*—an epithet, not of the grave, but of Sheol, or Hades. The parallelism demands the latter sense here; and, in truth, the other meaning hardly occurs, except in Job *l.c.*

Verse 11.—Thou wilt shew me the path of life.

Fulness of joy is in thy presence;

Delights are in thy right hand continually.

To the Psalmist deliverance from the fear of death presents itself, not as a mere negative thing, but as the positive conferring of life. The counterpart of seeing (*i.e.*, experiencing) the horrors of deep Sheol is that God makes him to know the path of life. So in the Proverbs the way of life is constantly contrasted with paths that lead down to death and Sheol (ii. 19; v. 6; xv. 24; &c.). The way of life is not merely a way that terminates in life, but such a way that the whole atmosphere surrounding him that walks in it is life and light. This can be no other than the way of righteousness (Prov. xii. 28), those straight paths of Jehovah in which the righteous walk while sinners stumble in them. This path of life is that in which (verse 8) the Psalmist's eyes are fixed on Jehovah, and his steps are upheld by his guidance. It is, in the words of Psalm cxvi. 9, a walk before Jehovah in the land of the living. And so the

joys, without which life would not be life (cf. Deut. xxx. 15), and the satiating fulness of which makes this a perfect life, are those which can be enjoyed only in access to God, and which radiate on man from his countenance. *In thy presence*, is literally *beside thy countenance*. (Cf. Psa. cxl. 13; xxi. 6.) Here, then, we return to the thought that rules the whole Psalm. The joys of the righteous are not simply given by God, but consist in the enjoyment of God. They are the pleasures that are constantly and abidingly in his hand. So in Psalm xvii. the happiness of the Psalmist is to see God's face, to be satiated with his likeness. This is no metaphysical contemplation of God, no abstract intellectual act, but the moral enjoyment of fellowship with Jehovah, of his love and grace, of the smile of the Divine favour, the light of his gracious countenance lifted up on the believer. (Psa. iv. 6, 7.)

No consideration of these last verses can be complete without some discussion of their relation to the doctrine of immortality. Let me, with a view to this purpose, first resume the course of thought which we have traced in the Psalm.

The Psalmist has a direct and personal consciousness of a relation to God as *his Lord*, which forbids him to turn aside after idols, or in any way to conceive to himself a good beyond God, or a dignity beyond consecration to Him. For God is his inheritance—a portion awarded to him by supreme grace, and rich enough to satisfy all his desires. This portion he finds in ethical fellowship with God, in continually hearing his guiding voice, in setting Him

ever before his eyes, in being ever sustained by his unfailing hand. Such a relation to God bears in it all the elements of joy. It raises the singer victorious above all evil, raises him above the pains and sorrows of his physical state into the assurance that his flesh too shall rest secure from the fear of ill.

This is plain to him. For the joys of God's fellowship are the joys of life. The poet is indeed incapable of conceiving any joy otherwise than as a life-joy. To him as to his whole nation, and to every man and every race which looks at these matters with fresh and natural vision, life is the potentiality of joy, and joy the manifestation and energy of life. And, again, he is incapable of associating life and joy with the shadowy existence of the disembodied soul in the land of darkness. We are accustomed to speak of the doctrine of Sheol as a doctrine of the immortality, the deathlessness, of the soul. But this is to read Old Testament teaching in the light of Western ideas. To a philosopher like Plato, who views the body only as a prison-house and a restraint, it is natural to speak of the life, the deathlessness, of the soul. But the Old Testament, as we have seen, has nothing in common with the estimate of the body and the bodily life on which such language rests. There is no reason to suppose that there ever was a time when the Hebrews held the annihilation of the soul in death. But the continued existence of the *Rephaim*—the weak and pithless shades that fill the realms of Sheol—is never thought of as life. Nay, it is the very contrary of life, opposed to it as darkness is to light, as shadow to substance, as weakness to strength, as inanity to joy. Nor does the develop-

ment of the hope of immortality in the religion of Revelation stand in any other than a negative relation to the doctrine of Sheol—except, of course, in so far as even that doctrine is at least a protest against absolute and crass materialism. The Bible vanquishes the fear of death, not by asserting the immortality of the soul against pure materialism, but by carrying the notion of life in its full and genuine sense beyond death, and so dispelling the dreary hopeless darkness of the land of silence and forgetfulness where Jehovah has set no memorial of Himself, where no voice is raised to praise Him, where love and hatred and envy are perished, where all the eager energies of life are sunk into oblivion and decay.¹

How little the notion of life and immortality is attached by Scripture to the mere persistence of the soul after death may be readily seen by contrasting the use of the word *immortality* (ἀθανασία) in the New Testament with its familiar Platonic sense. Occurring only thrice in all, the word is once applied to God, who alone hath immortality (1 Tim. vi. 16), and twice to the immortality conferred on the mortal nature of those who at the second coming of Christ are clad with the heavenly and incorruptible body without tasting of death (1 Cor. xv. 53, 54).² And that our Lord Himself consistently carried out the Old Testament view, and never conceived of the continued existence of the soul as true life, is plain from Mark xii. 26, *seq.*, where the thesis that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, is taken

¹ Psa. cxv. 17 ; lxxxviii. 10, *seq.*; vi. 5 ; Eccles. ix. &c.

² The adjective *immortal* does not occur in the New Testament.

as a direct proof of the doctrine of the resurrection, not of the continued existence of the patriarchs in Sheol.

And so, to return to our Psalm, that life upheld by fellowship with God which the Psalmist actually feels within him, pulsating through every fibre of his nature, and lifting up his heart with that buoyant exultant joy which belongs only to intense consciousness of the highest potency of vitality—this glorious life not only stands in sharpest contrast to the gloom and weakness of Sheol, but wrestles victoriously with the fear of Sheol, and asserts even for the weak and suffering body the right, the certainty, of restoration and life. And, in truth, how can it be otherwise? For what is death save the weakening and failure of the energies of life? (Cf. Isa. xiv. 10.) If in Sheol all these energies are faded and cease, it is certain that so long as they are fresh and full death is absolutely excluded. And the life in which the Psalmist exults is not dependent on bodily things, but is drunk directly from fellowship with God. Therefore, the weakness of the body cannot quell the energy of life, but, conversely, the body cannot fail as long as God upholds the life, so long as He, true to his covenant love, refuses to forsake the Psalmist's soul and suffer it to sink into Sheol. In short, the continuance of *life*, as distinguished from the persistence of the soul after death, is to the Psalmist the indispensable condition of continued fellowship with God. But fellowship with God is not a thing of this world, subject to fate and fortune, compelled to bend before bodily weakness and physical decay. That fellowship is a sovereign, a life-giving energy, to which the power of death itself must yield.

The whole argument is most closely bound up with the unvarying Old Testament doctrine that in death there is no revelation of God, in Sheol no voice to praise Him (Psa. vi. xxx. &c.). In the words of Jesus, He is not the God of the dead but of the living. They cannot cease to live whom God has not ceased to love.

It is manifest that this is the very argument by which Jesus confounded the Sadducees, that it is the only argument which can raise the hope of immortality from an edifying speculation, a solemnizing probability, to an immediate and personal certainty of life. Like every argument by which immediate certainty can be produced it is strictly transcendental and ideal. But not only does the Psalmist construct his argument without reference to induction and experience, he reasons, we may say, in the teeth of all experience and all induction.

This fact has puzzled expositors and has tempted some to hamper the conclusion by limitations of which the Psalm itself gives no hint. Not the most pious Israelite, says Kurz (*"Zur Theologie der Psalmen,"* p. 72), could think himself exempt from the invariable universality of the truth that all must die. The singer's hope must be subject to this necessary restriction. His certainty is only that he shall not be cut off in the midst of a life still strong to work and surrounded by tasks to which it is called. The singer, says Kurz, only hopes not to die till his work for God's kingdom is done.

Now, no one can deny that the Old Testament recognizes a great difference between the death by which a man is cut down in his prime (Isa. xxxviii.

10; Psa. cii. 24, &c.) and that which takes away the old man satiated with life (Authorized Version, *full of days*). The former is the most grievous of lots, the special punishment of the wicked (Psa. lv. 23), the sign of Jehovah's anger; the latter is contemplated with calmness, and recognized as a fit close to a life of felicity. (Job v. 26.)

But in order to determine how far these views admit of application to the train of thought laid down in our Psalm, it is necessary to consider their origin, and in particular to look at the religious contemplations with which they are bound up. If all considerations of the relation of God to man and of Divine retribution are set aside, the bitterness of death is naturally proportional to the intensity and sweetness of the life which it cuts short. When the failing energies of the old man forbid him to throw himself with zest into expectations for the future, or even to feel any keen relish in the sense of present life,¹ it is not unnatural for him to measure his sum of happiness by a retrospect of the past, and to confess himself, in Hebrew idiom, to have enjoyed his fill of life. And this vein of contemplation becomes more easy, and separates itself more completely from any spirit of querulousness, in a man whose days have been spent in the pursuit of larger interests than those of his own individual life; who has lived for others as well as for himself, for objects that do not die with him; and who, when unable to take any longer an active part in the furtherance of these objects, can bequeath his share in the future to the stronger generation of his sons and grandsons. And so, to

¹ Compare 2 Sam. xix. 35, *seq.*; Eccles. xii. 1.

the Israelite whose whole life was absorbed by intense devotion to the Theocracy, it was no small meed of happiness to see the good of Jerusalem all the days of his life ; to see children's children and peace upon Israel. (Psa. cxxviii.)

It is obvious, however, that this picture of the things that go to make up a full life to which nothing remains to be added that can make it a matter of desire to live longer, contains more than the purely natural elements with which we started above. The good of Jerusalem, the peace of Israel, involve religious ideas, and the relation of these to the natural features of the conception must be looked at more closely. The thing, larger than himself, which claimed the service of the Israelite's life, and in which he sought the highest good in which it was possible for him to participate, was the Theocracy, the visible kingdom of God administered by the unfailing power of Jehovah, executing his covenant with the fathers in accordance with the law of his eternal righteousness. To Israel following Jehovah was promised all felicity, while rebellion was menaced with every woe. The effect of this ordinance was not, as some have superficially supposed, to reduce the whole religion of Israel to a selfish service of God for the sake of earthly reward. The precepts and promises of the Pentateuch, however personal in form, are not addressed to individuals as such, but to Israel collectively. The primary notions are those of national obedience and national reward ; the ethical ideal is the establishment of national righteousness, and the felicity of the nation is the reward in which the felicity of the individual is to be found. The leading

blessings and chastisements rehearsed in such passages as Levit. xxvi., Deut. xxviii., good harvests or famine, peace or war, victory or defeat, and the like, are such as cannot visit the nation without involving the innocent along with the guilty. A religion which so fully recognizes the solidarity of the nation in all religious and moral interests, which places the hope of temporal felicity not simply in the maintenance of personal innocence, but in the establishment of social righteousness, does not lie open to the reproach of setting forth a mean and selfish ideal. No one who knows human nature will suppose it possible to induce a man to pursue a great social and ethical aim—the setting fast of righteousness in the earth—merely with a selfish view to his personal share in the temporal felicity with which righteousness is rewarded. The whole scheme is such as to make the moral aim the one absorbing thought of the godly Israelite, while the assurance of temporal felicity as the tangible reward of righteousness serves to give to all human faculties and desires their due recognition in harmony with the grand postulate of religion that the righteous God orders the whole universe in accordance with the law of righteousness.

It is manifest, then, that the whole tendency of this scheme was to carry the highest hopes and interests of the Israelite beyond himself. His life-work did not die with him, for it was devoted to the service of a covenant God in the pursuit of righteousness, the good of Israel. And when his work was over, when he had no more force to spend on the object so dear to him; when his children had risen up to fill his place, to inherit his duties and privileges; when, with

all this, he could say, looking back on the past, that he had seen the good of Jerusalem all the days of his life, and in this reflection realized as an actual fact of his experience the reality of God's righteous and gracious kingship, then his life possessed an æsthetic completeness and an intrinsic satisfactoriness which made its close at such a point natural and free from bitterness. He was satisfied with length of days (Psa. xci. 16), and, for the rest, he knew that the sons of God's servants shall dwell, and their seed be established, before Him. (Psa. cii. 28.)

Perhaps even the experience of God's goodness in participation in the good of Jerusalem was not so indispensable an element in this picture of a full life as may at first sight be supposed. Even national calamity conceived as judgment on national sin was a manifestation of God's righteousness, with a gracious as well as a penal meaning, to which the godly in Israel could not refuse their deepest sympathy. That the purifying judgments, directed according to the principle of joint responsibility for national sin, were shared by the godly man himself, could not destroy his sympathy with the Divine work, but rather was the only provision by which that sympathy could be purged from all selfish taint. And so, though the believer, whose life-work was done, might have to look back, not on placid years of God-fearing prosperity, but on a long and stern battle for the right, fought amidst much sin and much suffering, he had still no cause to think his life vain. God at least had upheld him in his work. He had carried it on to the end; amidst all that was dark in the dispensations of Providence it yet had been made

clear to him in his sorest troubles that Jehovah is righteous, and loveth righteous deeds.

This is not the place for an attempt to develop these thoughts more precisely, to determine the exact extent to which the subordination of individual interests to the grand aim of setting fast God's righteousness on earth could enable the faith of the Old Testament to dispense with the confirmation of personal prosperity, even where there was no clear hope of resurrection to final retribution in the future consummation of God's kingdom. But one thing at least is clear: there is nothing in this whole line of contemplation which can render death at all tolerable to the man who still feels the energy of life fresh within him. There is at least one promise of the law to which it is impossible to give other than an individual reference—Exodus xxiii. 26: *The number of thy days will I fulfil.* Just in proportion as the whole intensity of the life of the godly was concentrated on the cause of God on earth, must it be to him absolute failure, and, therefore, absolute misery, to be excluded, I do not say from the triumph, but from the battle-field, of the great cause. To be cut off in the mid-time of his days, to be withdrawn to the land of darkness when he has still a voice to praise God and bear good witness to Him, to see Jehovah no longer in the land of the living (Psa. vi. xxx. cii. ; Isa. xxxviii. &c.), that is a fate in which no drop of comfort can be found. It can have no other meaning than that God has refused to pardon the sufferer's sin, has refused to give him a place in his all-conquering host, a name in his holy army; that in hot anger He sweeps away his soul with

sinner and his life with men of blood (Psa. xxvi. 9. ; lv. 23, &c.). Of course, it is not to be imagined that a sharp objective line can be drawn between a life which ends in due time, acknowledged by God and with the peaceful sense of acceptance with Him, and one which is broken off by God's anger, and implies rejection from his presence. The mere number of a man's years can never have been conceived to be an adequate criterion. Even in old age and grey hairs, the singer of Psalm lxxi. still cries eagerly that he may not be forsaken in failing strength, that he may be spared still to declare God's arm and might. Or, on the other hand, Elijah, in the prime of his days, after striking one great stroke for God's kingdom, can sit down and say : " Enough, Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers." But the distinction is none the less real because defined by a fluctuating and, in great measure, subjective boundary. A future state which has as its essential quality the cessation of all the energy and effort of life, can commend itself only as a place of rest (Isa. lvii. 2.), and so can appear other than evil only to the " wearied in strength " (Job iii. 17, margin), to the man all whose force for life on earth is spent, and who seeks no more than peaceful repose.

Now, we find many passages in the Old Testament in which these ideas are applied to the case of a man face to face with some deadly trouble. Sometimes the sufferer, who feels himself to be cut off in the midst of his days, is oppressed with a sense of rejection from God. (Isa. xxxviii. ; Psa. lxxxviii.) At other times, while the affliction is keenly felt as an expression of God's wrath, the sufferer is able to

wrestle through the sense of wrath to assurance of forgiveness and restoration. (Psa. vi. xiii. xxx.) At other times we see less of struggle and more of placid, or even exultant, confidence that God does accept the person and the service of the singer, and that, therefore, he shall not die, but live, and recount the works of Jah. (Psa. cxviii. lxxi. cxvi.)

But in all these cases, I conceive, the argument is quite distinct from that of our Psalm. We have here no struggle between apprehension of God's wrath and hope in his salvation. Life is not pleaded for as a pledge of the forgiveness of the Psalmist's sin, the acceptance of his person and service. There is no trace of the thought, "Let me not die now, when my work is undone and my life imperfect, and when therefore thou canst end them only because thou rejectest them wholly." The whole Psalm moves in a serene atmosphere of the fullest assurance. The hope of continued life has no reference whatever to the singer's age or life-work, or anything that is in him. That hope is the direct fruit of God's continued love. It is impossible to suppose the Psalmist tacitly to add that though he hopes for life now, a day must come when life can no longer be an object of desire, when his wearied frame shall gladly sink into the grave. What makes life worth living is, on the view of this Psalm, not any energy that decays in old age, but that communion of love with God which can never fail.

It is objected that this argument, if it proves anything, proves too much—that if it gives assurance of recovery from one mortal sickness, it implies in general that physical death can have no hold on him

who stands in God's grace. But it is to be observed that life and death are here apprehended, not in their physical and empirical manifestation, but in their ideal qualities. The life which the Psalmist knows to be undying is *the continual energy of loving fellowship with God*. The death to which this life can never yield is the silence of the land of forgetfulness, where there is no revelation and no praise of God. These two ideas are embodied for the Psalmist under the form of life in this world, on the one hand, and death and Sheol on the other. Now the religious consciousness can never be satisfied by asserting a noumenal transcendental truth without applying it to actual phenomenal experience. The indissolubleness of the life in God is to the Psalmist a present reality. As such it must approve itself true under the present forms and conditions of his existence, that is, in physical life as contrasted with physical death. In no other way can he conceive the great truth as present and practical. It would be ridiculous for the inspired singer, who possesses an ideal truth in ideal certainty, to pause in the fulness of his faith, and reflect on the empirical fact that, after all, no man escapes death. He knows that he cannot yield to death in the only form in which he fears it, namely, as separation from God; and he conceives this immunity in the only form in which he has any means of conceiving it, namely as continued physical life. It is true that this persuasion is a paradox. It is true that so high a confidence, so unconditionally expressed, can reign to the exclusion of all doubt and fear only in a moment of highest elevation, and that the same

singer, under a sense of sin and weakness, of failing strength and of God's displeasure, must soon have passed through bitter experiences such as we read of in other psalms—experiences far removed from the joyful confidence and energy of the words before us. But so long as the strong sense of full loving communion with God which our Psalm expresses remains undimmed, no doubt can receive entrance. What we call physical impossibilities never had any existence for the faith of the Old Testament, which viewed every physical condition as implicitly obedient to Jehovah's law of righteousness. So long, then, as the Psalmist stands in unfailing fellowship with God he must live, and cannot cease to live. It is only when the sense of sin arises as the consciousness of *impeded* fellowship with God that there can arise at the same time a sense of uncertainty and limitation in the hope of life.

Thus the paradox of our Psalm resolves itself in the one great Old Testament paradox—Jehovah, a God of boundless love and grace, admitting man into fullest fellowship with Himself, and yet a God who has no fellowship with sinners. A God merciful and gracious, but yet who cannot acquit the guilty. And so long as this paradox remained unsolved it was not possible for the Old Testament saints to reach a clear and consistent hope of immortality. They could only vibrate between opposing views. Where the sense of sin standing between man and God was swallowed up in the confidence of full acceptance they reached forth to the glorious hopes of our Psalm, and death and all evil vanished before the light of God's love. But when this brightness

passed away and the sense of sin and wrath lay heavy on them, when man's weakness and nothingness before God stamped all life as fleeting and shadowy, they sank back almost to despair (Psa. lxxxviii.), or at least lived almost habitually in a faith which contented itself with the thought that as all have sinned, all must die, and sought only to realize a sense of forgiveness and acceptance within the limits of this irrevocable doom. (Psa. xc. &c.)

The Psalter includes psalms which express the whole gamut of Old Testament feeling on the subject of death, and so bears witness, on the one hand, how little there was any fixed and settled doctrine on the topic ; and, on the other hand, how wisely the Old Testament church refused to exclude from her liturgy any expression of religious feeling which, however paradoxical it might seem, bore its own reason within itself. That the sixteenth Psalm delineates an ideal which throughout the Old Testament dispensation was never realized fully,—that is, in a whole life,—but which only expressed the highest climax of subjective conviction, was not felt to detract from its religious truth. Nay, in religion the ideal *is* the true. The destiny of him who is admitted into full fellowship with God *is* life, and if that fellowship has never yet been perfectly realized it must be realized in time to come in the consummation of God's kingdom and righteousness. This, like other glorious promises of God, is deferred because of sin ; but, though deferred, is not cancelled. Thus the psalm, originally an expression of direct personal persuasion, must necessarily, in its place in the Old Testament liturgy, have acquired a prophetic significance, and so must

have been accepted as parallel to such highest anticipations of eschatological prophecy as Isaiah xxv 8, "He hath swallowed up death for ever."

Individual worshippers participating in the Temple service of praise would not, in general, appropriate the psalm with the same feeling of immediate conviction which belongs to its original composition. The psalm, accepted as prophetic, could most readily have a personal application in so far as every Israelite might hope to see with his own eyes the glorious consummation of God's kingdom. This would be parallel to the way in which we find in the Apostolic Churches a wide-spread hope of living till the second coming of Christ. Or, failing this, it is probable that, even in Old Testament times, the psalm might be viewed in the light of that doctrine of the resurrection which appears in connection with the destruction of death in the prophecy quoted above (Isa. xxvi.), and which, at a later date, is formulated in the Book of Daniel.

We may say, then, that in the mouth of the Psalmist himself our psalm did not set forth a remote prophecy or a religious problem, but a truth of direct spiritual intuition. But accepted into the Old Testament liturgy as an expression of the faith of Israel, and so confronted with that experience of sin and imperfect communion with God of which the Old Testament was so sensible, it necessarily became part of a problem which runs through the whole dispensation, while at the same time it was a help towards the solution of the problem. Like other psalms in which the ideal is developed in the teeth of the empirical, it came to possess a prophetic value for

the Church, and it was felt to set forth truth only in so far as it was transferred from the present to the future.

Nor could it be otherwise so long as the psalm was taken on the lips of men who only in a passing ecstasy of faith could feel their fellowship with God to be absolute and indissoluble. So soon as this joyous consciousness is crossed by the sense of abiding and indwelling sin, the whole ground of the Psalmist's present conviction is broken. Where the soul is not wholly absorbed in God and the heart not united to do his will, there the life which is inalienable is not yet present in that force by which it triumphs over death and the grave.

But when He was manifested among men who bore unbroken through all his life the absolute consciousness of sinless fellowship with God, He in whom man was indeed bound to God by bonds indissoluble, then the words of the psalm were no longer an ideal of the future but a present and abiding reality. *Him God raised up, loosing the cords of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it* (Acts ii. 24).

The psalm is fulfilled in Christ, because in Christ the transcendental ideal of fellowship with God which the psalm sets forth becomes a demonstrated reality. And becoming true of Christ, the psalm is also true of all who are his, and in the Psalmist's claim to use it for himself the soundness of his religious insight is vindicated; for Christ faced death not only for Himself but as our Surety and Head. The bond that bound his life to God is also the bond to bind us to God. He identified Him-

self wholly with us and our sins. Laden with our guilt He descended into the valley of the shadow of death; and if his union with God is stronger than the power of death, it is because his righteousness is stronger than our sins.

Thus in Christ the ideal of life eternal in God, of a life superior to all destructive forces, is made a reality. It does not, indeed, become so under the very form in which our Psalmist conceives of it. We no longer feel entitled to argue from our acceptance with God to victory over physical disease and deliverance from physical death; but that is not because our hope is less high, but because in the light of the New Testament mere physical death is seen as a thing wholly disconnected with the spiritual death of alienation from God, which, under physical form, is the real evil over which the singer of our psalm feels himself victorious. It is our New Testament hope that death itself does not for a moment interrupt full and joyous life-fellowship with God. For the Christian, Sheol, the place of forgetfulness, exists no more, and the hope of them that live and of them that die alike is that we shall ever be with the Lord.

W. ROBERTSON SMITH.

ON THE EPISTLES OF ST. PETER.

THE SECOND EPISTLE.

AN inquiry such as we have hitherto been endeavouring to make into the characteristics of St. Peter's style must, when it comes to deal with the Second Epistle, be mainly directed against the objections of those who have concluded that this

second Letter was put forth in the name of the apostle of the Circumcision by some clever imitator of St. Peter's manner of writing, but was really composed at a much later date than that to which it would lay claim if it were the genuine work of the apostle whose name it bears. But though the observations which will be made will apply most directly to the question of imitation, it is not intended to leave out of sight other objections which have been urged against the genuineness of this composition. The later acceptance of the Epistle into the Canon, and its enumeration among the Eusebian *ἀντιλεγόμενα*, will be borne in mind, as well as other features of discrepancy, which some have pointed out in the contents of the two Epistles: such as, the different way in which our Lord's second coming is spoken of in the two letters; the more prominent notice assigned to the sufferings of Christ in the First Epistle as compared with the Second; the seemingly anxious assertion on the part of the writer of the Second Epistle that he was really the apostle St. Peter, a tone indicative of one who was assuming a character not his own; the name of "holy" applied (Chap. i. 18) to the mountain of the Transfiguration, which form of expression is deemed a sign of a later date than the apostolic age; also the mention of St. Paul's Epistles and the other scriptures made in Chap. iii. 15, 16, which some have considered to afford evidence that this Letter was written at a much later period than its language claims for it, and at a time when the Epistles of St. Paul and other parts of the New Testament volume had been collected, and were in extensive circulation. But while ex-

pecting to have somewhat to say to each of these classes of objection, it seems most probable that if one kind of opposition can be satisfactorily disposed of first, a portion of the other questions which have arisen about the genuineness of the Epistle may be found to have been answered, as it were, by anticipation.

We shall have to dwell very fully on the similarity of the language of this Epistle to all else which is Petrine in the New Testament, for our design is to shew that such likeness is far closer than any imitator would either have dared or have been able to make it. And we will begin our comparison with the two Epistles.

Some of the points of resemblance between them which have been considered to betray the hand of an imitator, are the following: The salutation, "Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied," is found in 2 Pet. i. 2, as well as in 1 Pet. i. 2. The writer of the Second Epistle uses the noun *ἀναστροφή*, *conversation*, and its cognate verb exactly as they are employed in the earlier letter. Thus, 2 Pet. ii. 7, "Just Lot is vexed with the filthy *conversation* of the wicked;" and in verse 18 of the same Chapter men are spoken of who "live in error," but where a more consistent rendering would be "whose *conversation* is in error;" and in 2 Pet. iii. 11 we read of "holy *conversation* and godliness." In the First Epistle this word is common; thus (Chap. i. 15), "Be ye holy in all manner of *conversation*," and (verse 17), "pass the time of your sojourning here in fear," where, to bring out the resemblance which the original passages bear to each other, we should render, "for the time of your

sojourn here let your *conversation* be in fear;" and in the following verse (18) the writer speaks of "vain *conversation*." In the second Chapter (verse 12) we come upon, "Having your *conversation* honest among the Gentiles;" and in the third (verses 1, 2, and 16) we read of the "*conversation* of the wives," "chaste *conversation*," and of a "good *conversation* in Christ." In like manner ἀπόθεσις is found in 2 Pet. i. 14, of the *putting off* of the earthly tabernacle; and in 1 Pet. iii. 21 (and nowhere else in the whole of the New Testament), of "the *putting away* of the filth of the flesh." The writer of one Epistle resembles the writer of the other in employing ἀρετή, *virtue*, or *excellence*, in speaking of God. For in 1 Pet. ii. 9 we have, "That ye should shew forth the *praises* [*excellencies*] of him who hath called you;" and in 2 Pet. i. 3, "that hath called us through [not *to*, the preposition is διὰ] his glory and *virtue*." The writers of these Epistles alone employ this word in such a way in the New Testament. Again, the "without blemish and without spot" of 1 Pet. i. 19 appears in "spots are they, and blemishes" (2 Pet. ii. 13), and "without spot and blameless" (2 Pet. iii. 14). Ἐπόπτης, an *eye-witness*, used in 2 Pet. i. 16, may be, paralleled by ἐποπτεύειν, a verb which St. Peter, fond of ocular demonstration as we have seen him to be and believing in its influence, employs twice in the First Epistle. He says (Chap. ii. 12), "Evildoers may by your good works which they shall *behold* [be eye-witnesses of] glorify God;" and once more (Chap. iii. 2), "while they *behold* your chaste conversation." Both writers employ ἴδιος in the sense of the Latin "*suus*," that is, merely as a possessive

adjective. Thus (1 Pet. iii. 1), "*your own* husbands," and, four verses lower down, "*their own* husbands;" so in 2 Pet. i. 20, where the writer is speaking of prophecy as not being *ιδίας ἐπιλύσεως*, and in which place the most coherent sense is obtained by rendering "No prophecy arises [the verb is *γίγνεται*] out of the prophet's *own* interpretation,"—that is, it is not a foretelling of what is to come by a man who knows what he means when he utters it,—“for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man.” Another instance of this pronominal use of *ιδιος* is in 2 Pet. ii. 16: “But he was rebuked for *his* iniquity;” and in verse 22 of the same Chapter, “his *own* vomit,” where it ought to be noticed that though the writer is perhaps quoting from the Proverbs (Chap. xxvi. 11), he does not take the form of expression for the pronoun (*ἐαυτοῦ*) which is used in the version of the LXX., a version which was well known, and which he might have been expected to quote, but employs his favourite *ιδιος*, and makes, as it seems, a rendering of his own, of which we shall have to speak in another place. Thus also is the word *ιδιος* used in 2 Pet. iii. 16, “their *own* destruction.” After the same manner *κομίζεσθαι* is found in both Epistles of the *receiving* of rewards or punishments: as in 1 Pet. i. 9, “*Receiving* the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls;” and in 1 Pet. v. 4, “ye shall *receive* a crown of glory that fadeth not away;” which examples have their counterpart in 2 Pet. ii. 13, “and shall *receive* the reward of unrighteousness.” In both Letters the same expression is found, of “walking in, or after, the lusts of the flesh.” (Cf. 1 Pet. iv. 3 with 2 Pet. ii. 10 and iii.

3.) *Καλεῖν* is used in both of the Divine invitation to mankind, as in 1 Pet. i. 15, "He which hath *called* you is holy," so in 1 Pet. ii. 9 and 21; iii. 9; v. 10; and 2 Pet. i. 3; and the expression (1 Pet. iv. 1), "He that hath suffered in the flesh *hath ceased from sin*," is nearly reproduced in 2 Pet. ii. 14,—"*eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin.*"

On some of the instances here adduced too much stress ought not to be laid, as, although it is true that they constitute points of resemblance between these two Epistles, yet the like usages may be found in other parts of the New Testament. But there are several other points of similarity in the language of these two Letters which ought to be enumerated before the list can be considered to approach completeness. And as the object of the present paper is to insist on a far greater resemblance between this Second Epistle and the other utterances and writings of St. Peter than has been shewn in the passages above cited, an attempt must be made, even at the risk of proving tedious in the recital, to give some of the chief additions which should be made to the examples already set down. And we will take them in the order in which they occur in the Second Epistle. In 2 Pet. i. 4 we have the word *τίμιος* used of "*precious promises.*" Except in St. Peter's language this word is used in the New Testament nearly always of material solid things, as of *stones, fruit, wood, &c.*; only St. Paul, in Acts xx. 24, employing it when speaking of the value of his life. Now in 1 Pet. i. 19 it is used of the "*precious blood*;" and the way had been paved for this transference of the adjective from its common application by the expression in verse 7

of the same Chapter, "the trial of your faith being much more *precious* than of gold that perisheth." Again, the way in which *κοινωνός* is used in both Epistles should be mentioned. In the Authorized Version of 2 Pet. i. 4 we read, "that by these ye might be made *partakers* of the divine nature." But this rendering does not bring out in any measure the force of the verb *γένησθε*. A far better version would be "that thereby ye *may become* partakers." So the sense of the passage will be, "God has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, . . . whence we have his exceeding great and precious promises that by these ye may become *partakers* of the divine nature." Here the participation is spoken of as a result to be attained in the future. Just so in 1 Pet. v. 1 is *κοινωνός* employed to describe the apostle himself as "*a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.*" Such use of the word as expressing a realization in the present of what is not yet attained to, but to be striven for, is found in no other writer of the New Testament. Nor ought that appeal to the knowledge of those to whom the writer speaks in 2 Pet. i. 12 to be passed over without observing how closely it resembles a passage in the earlier Letter, and may almost certainly be taken as an allusion thereto. The previous verses are an exhortation, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure, . . . for thus an entrance shall be ministered unto you . . . into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore," adds the writer, "I will not be negligent to put you in remembrance of these things, though [*εἰδότες*] ye know them. We have only to read over 1 Pet. i. 18

to be almost certain that we have the words to which the later-written passage is an allusion. Here we have the same thought of a diligent and careful walk in holiness, with an exactly parallel appeal to the knowledge of his hearers on the subject of their redemption: "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear, knowing [εἰδότες] that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ."

Nor, in a comparison like the present, should we omit to notice that use of ἐνεχθεὶς in 2 Pet. i. 18. "This voice which *came* from heaven" is the Authorized Version, but the verb implies much more than this, and instead of "which came" we might well read "which was brought." Now, we have already seen how much the early Chapters of the Acts of the Apostles represent the language of St. Peter rather than any other member of the apostolic band, and there, in the account of the Pentecostal enlightenment (Acts ii. 2), we have the same verb, only in another tense (φερόμενος), employed in the description of the "sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind;" and it is worthy of note also, that that manifestation is called φωνή, *a voice*, the word which the writer of this Second Epistle employs in the verse which we are now considering. Our English version of Acts ii. 6 entirely obscures the connection which we desire to point out, for it renders, "Now, when this was noised abroad," words which would be more accurately translated, "Now, when this *voice* was heard," a reference to the sound of "the rushing mighty wind" which had been mentioned in the previous verse. If we had nothing

further, the resemblance in language which is here observable might warrant us in inferring a connection between St. Peter and the Second Epistle which bears his name; but when we see that in the First Epistle (Chap. i. 13) that apostle uses the very word *φερόμενος* of the grace "that shall *be brought* for Christians at the revelation of Jesus Christ," we feel that we have in these words, thus employed, a link which connects the Second Epistle with the First and with the narrative in the Acts far more firmly than would be done by any more immediately apparent similarity of expression. For, notice how closely the whole sentence (1 Pet. i. 12, 13) is connected with the mention of the descent of the Holy Ghost, and it will be seen that we have here another instance of what is so common with this apostle, where one thought in his mind has influenced his mode of expression in the sentence which immediately follows it. "Not unto themselves," he says, "did they minister the things which are now reported unto you by them which have preached the gospel unto you with the *Holy Ghost sent down from heaven*. . . . Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be *brought unto you* [*φερομένην*] at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Again, the writers of both Epistles used *ἀσέλγεια* in the plural (a very rare use of the word) of those evil practices which were always so closely connected with errors of doctrine in the early Church. In 2 Pet. ii. 2 it is a "*lasciviousness* whereby the way of truth is evil spoken of." In 1 Pet. iv. 3 a like *lasciviousness* is defined as a working of "the will

or desire of the Gentiles." Once more, in two so brief Epistles, it is worth notice that both writers employ the somewhat uncommon word *διάνοια* for *mind*—in 2 Pet. iii. 1, "I stir up your pure *minds* by way of remembrance," and in 1 Pet. i. 13, "Gird up the loins of your *mind*." So, too, both writers use the passive participles *τηρούμενος* and *τετηρημένος* in exactly the same manner concerning the rewards *in store* for the righteous and of the wicked who are kept *in store* for the day of punishment. Thus, in 1 Pet. i. 4, an inheritance . . . *reserved* in heaven; and in 2 Pet. ii. 4, "The angels that sinned are *reserved* unto fire against the day of judgment."

These instances, and there are some others which might still be added to the list, demonstrate a very large amount of resemblance in the expressions and, also, what is of more importance, in the mode of thought of the person or persons by whom these Epistles were written. But it is necessary next to call attention to the list of resemblances that can be traced between the language of this Epistle and that of the Second Gospel and of those parts of the Acts which are either St. Peter's very words, or which must, in the first instance, have been derived from him.

And, first, in St. Mark's Gospel alone, with the exception of this Second Epistle, is the verb *δωρέομαι* employed in the New Testament. In Chap. xv. 45 St. Mark uses it of Pilate, who gave (*ἔδωρήσατο*) Christ's body to Joseph of Arimathea; and in 2 Pet. i. 3 we read, "his divine power hath given unto us [*ἔδωρημένης*] all things that pertain to life and godliness." The word *βασανίζω* is found in the same

tropical meaning both in this Epistle and in the Second Gospel. The word implies, in its original sense, *to test by a touchstone, or by the use of torture*. But it is afterwards transferred to any torment, and so these writers both use it. Thus 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8, "Just Lot *vexed* his righteous soul from day to day" with the unlawful deeds of the people of Sodom. And in St. Mark (Chap. vi. 48) the same word is used of the disciples whom Christ, from his lonely station on the mountain-top, saw "*toiling* in rowing" on the Sea of Galilee. So, again, both these writers employ in the same way *τρέμειν*, a word uncommon in the New Testament. With the Evangelist (Chap. v. 33) the woman with the issue of blood came fearing and *trembling*; with the Apostle (2 Pet. ii. 10), "They *tremble* not to speak evil of dignities." When a word like this is found but once more in the whole of the New Testament, it is worth noting for our purpose that it occurs in writings which we desire to assign to the same source. And the same remark applies to the word *λαίλαψ*. In 2 Pet. ii. 17 we have it in the expression, "Clouds that are carried with a *tempest*;" and in St. Mark (Chap. iv. 37), "There arose a great *storm* of wind." But though storms and tempests are not of rare mention in the New Testament scriptures we have *λαίλαψ* only once more, and that is in St. Luke (Chap. viii. 23), of the same occurrence as is related by St. Mark; and most likely the authors of both the Gospels, as neither of them were eye-witnesses of the event, drew their narratives from the same source, and that source St. Peter. The late Dean Alford, in his Prolegomena to this Epistle, has pointed out a trace of allusion to the Gospel

narratives of the Transfiguration (of which the history was, as we have before shewn, most probably drawn from the narration of St. Peter), which he shews to contain a note of the genuineness of this second Letter. In 2 Pet. i. 17, 18, we have a reference to the presence of the writer at the Transfiguration of our Lord. It is a remarkable coincidence that close to that reference, and in the verses leading on to it, two words should occur both of which are connected with the narrative of the Transfiguration in the Gospels. In verse 13 we read, "As long as I am in this *tabernacle*;" let us remember that it was St. Peter who, at the Transfiguration, said, "Let us make three *tabernacles*." In verse 15 we have the expression, "after my *departure*" (*ἐξόδου*); at the Transfiguration, Moses and Elias talked with Jesus (Luke ix. 31) of "his decease [also *ἐξόδου*], which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." In the light of all that has been already said of the retrospective character of St. Peter's mind, and the influence which such retrospection exercised upon his speech, we look upon such an example as the one just detailed as a very strong indication that the writer was the same person who shewed such power in the First Epistle of intimating by his language the scenes on which his memory was exercised, and who could and did recall so minutely the events of our Lord's life in which himself had been concerned.

But if the resemblances between the language of this Epistle and the Gospel of St. Mark be noteworthy, still more striking are those instances where the Epistle uses words such as are recorded of St. Peter in the Acts. In the very first verse we find

an interesting example. In speaking of those who "have *obtained* the like precious faith with us," the writer makes use of the verb λαγχάνω, a word which occurs in the same sense in St. Peter's speech in Acts i. 17, where of Judas it is said, "He had *obtained* part of this ministry." But in this sense the word is found nowhere else in the New Testament. Again, the way in which this writer employs ἐνσέβεια, in the sense of *holiness*, viewed rather objectively as a potentiality in exercise than subjectively as a part of a character, is just what St. Peter does in his speech to the Jewish rulers, after the cure of the lame man at the Temple Gate. "Why look ye on us," says he (Acts iii. 12), "as though by our own power or *holiness* we had made this man to walk?" And in the Epistle (Chap. i. 7) we find this ἐνσέβεια, represented in the Authorized Version by *godliness*, enumerated as one of those qualities which will make the possessor neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Once more : that use of λαλεῖν for the message of God to man, which has been already noticed as a feature of the Epistle, is also seen in the speeches of St. Peter. Thus (Acts iii. 21): "Which God hath spoken [ἐλάλησεν] by the mouth of all his holy prophets." And again in the twenty-fourth verse: "All the prophets, as many as have spoken [ἐλάλησαν], have also foretold of these days." It is worthy of notice also that the word ἐπάγειν, which the writer of the Epistle has used (Chap. ii. 5) to express the "*bringing in the flood upon* the ungodly," is the same which is used in those proceedings before the Sanhedrim when St. Peter and his companions were

brought again in custody after their miraculous deliverance (Acts v. 28). There the spokesman of the Jewish council is made to say, "Ye intend to *bring this man's blood upon us*;" and no doubt this was the expression which St. Peter used when he narrated the circumstances of the hearing, and from his lips ἐπάγειν came into St. Luke's narrative. Again, the use of ἄνομος concerning things and not persons is confined to St. Peter in the Acts and to the writer of this Epistle. The latter speaks (Chap. ii. 8) of the "*unlawful* deeds" by which Lot was vexed, and the former (Acts ii. 23) calls the hands by which Christ was slain *unlawful* (Authorized Version, *wicked*). In all other instances the adjective is employed of lawless *persons*. Once more, in the Epistle (Chap. ii. 9) we find ἐνσεβής is employed by the writer to describe *godly* persons: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the *godly* out of temptations." Now, this same word is employed (Acts x. 2, 7) in the character of Cornelius, and also of the soldier whom he sent to summon Peter to come to Cæsarea. This description must have come from the lips of that apostle, and the word is used nowhere else in the New Testament. For in Acts xx. 12, where some MSS. have this adjective, the best read ἐυλαβής, which is adopted both by Lachmann and Tischendorf. In the same verse (Chap. ii. 8) of the Epistle we have κολαζομένους employed, "to reserve the unjust *to be punished*," and a part of the same verb is, in Acts iv. 21 (a Petrine narrative), "finding nothing how they might *punish* them." "The *reward* of iniquity," used by St. Peter (Acts i. 18) of Judas, occurs in 2

Pet. ii. 13, and 15, in the latter case concerning Balaam, though the Authorized Version has obscured the evidence of the identity of the original by translating the latter "wages of unrighteousness," and has rendered the same words in verse 13, "the reward of unrighteousness." The unusual verb φθέγγομαι is found twice in the Epistle: first (Chap. ii. 16), of Balaam's "ass *speaking* with man's voice;" and, again (Chap. ii. 18), of those who "*speaking* great swelling words of vanity." Neither Evangelist nor Apostle uses the word elsewhere, except in Acts iv. 18, where it occurs in the injunction given to Peter and his comrades that they should not "*speaking* at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus." And this whole narrative, as we have already remarked, is full of indications that its author was St. Peter, the principal actor in the events recorded. And, once more, we ought to dwell on the occurrence in both books (the Acts and 2 Peter) of the expression, *ἡμέρα κυρίου*, for that phrase is found only in 1 Thess. v. 24 and in the two passages about to be quoted. But the whole language of St. Peter's quotation from Joel (Acts ii. 20), "The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before that great and notable *day of the Lord* come," is so manifestly in the mind of the writer of our Epistle (Chap. iii. 10), that we may look upon the words of this third Chapter as a solemn close of the apostle's ministration, made emphatic by what is a forcible repetition of the teaching of his first sermon. "*The day of the Lord* will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat;

the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." How closely, too, the thoughts of the writer of the Epistle are in accord with the thoughts of St. Peter in the Acts we may see from the consideration of such passages as 2 Pet. i. 21. There, speaking of prophecy, the writer declares "it came not in old time by the will of men." Put this sentence side by side with that part of St. Peter's speech (Acts ii. 23) in which he describes the whole events of Christ's death as the result of God's decree, and it is seen how the two passages are the counterparts to each other. "Him," says the Apostle in this Pentecostal sermon, "being delivered by the determinate counsel and *foreknowledge* of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Both prophecy and the events which fulfil it are of God's will, and above man's control. And we may take occasion, from the word *πρόγνωσις*, *foreknowledge* (which only is found here and in 1 Pet. i. 2, "according to the *foreknowledge* of God the Father"), to observe that a like verbal similarity to that which we have striven to point out between the Second Epistle and the Acts and St. Mark's Gospel exists between those writings and the First Epistle of St. Peter. Where, then, two Letters have this feature so conspicuous, it affords, without anything else, a strong presumption that the writer of the one was the writer of the other. And these imitations, not of the First Epistle only, but of St. Mark and the Acts; imitations, not only of words, but of manner, make it hard to conceive that the Second Epistle is supposititious. The writer, if he were not St. Peter, putting out of sight for a moment the great dis-

honesty that would then be contained in the assertions made in the Letter, a dishonesty quite inconsistent with the solemn tone and purpose of this Epistle, must have been the most accomplished of forgers. He must have been not content with imitating one Letter in the other, but must have seen how much stronger his case would be if he introduced peculiarities from St. Peter's language such as are found in the Second Gospel and the Acts, and must have inserted such phrases accordingly. And all this must have been done under a false name, in a letter saying, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables," in a letter containing warnings against deceivers and exhorting the readers to "all holy conversation and godliness" in prospect of the judgment, that they might at that day be found "without spot or blemish." Such cleverness of imitation is difficult to believe in, and that one who would attempt it should do so in such solemn terms is still more incredible.

But we have not yet seen the whole of this writer's powers. For if he be an imitator, he is one who has exactly hit the striking peculiarities of St. Peter's modes of thought and expression. We have seen in all the acknowledged words of that apostle that his only end for knowledge was that it might be put into practice. Precisely of this character is the language of the writer of the Second Epistle. After that marshalling, in the opening of the Epistle, of the Christian graces in the order in which they seem most fitly to succeed each other, he concludes his exhortation to a diligent cultivation thereof, thus: (Chap. i. 8). "For if these things be in you, and abound,

they make you that ye shall *neither be barren nor unfruitful* in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ;" and immediately he follows this admonition with the assurance (verse 10), "For if ye *do* these things, ye shall never fall." And this peculiar turn of mind is perceived very strongly when we consider the examples which the writer brings forward in the second Chapter of the Epistle. He is warning those to whom he addresses himself of the evils of "false teachers, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies;" and he selects as instances to illustrate his lesson, first, "the angels that sinned." In their case it *was* the false promptings of the father of lies that led his fellows into the rebellion which ended in their expulsion from heaven. But with the precise train of thought which we should have expected from St. Peter, who felt that teaching, be it bad or good, must shew itself in action, the writer chooses all his further illustrations, which are three, from those offenders of whose evil *deeds* rather than evil *lessons* we should soonest be led to think. They are "the world of the ungodly," destroyed by the flood, when all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth; the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah condemned with an overthrow as an example unto "those that after should *live* ungodly;" and "Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of *unrighteousness*." We have only to follow the exhortation a few verses farther (Chap. ii. 20) when we find the effect of knowledge directly described in its influence on the life. It is by the "knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" that men "escape the pollutions of the world." And to the same end is the

solemn lesson of the approaching judgment applied by the writer (Chap. iii. 11), "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" So, too, with the expectation of a new heaven and a new earth (Chap. iii. 14), the end is to be a more careful walk while living here, "Seeing that ye look for such things, be *diligent*, that ye may be found of him in peace, *without spot and blameless*." And the sad result of "being led away with the error of the wicked" is declared (Chap. iii. 17) in the same spirit to be a "fall from your own steadfastness." In every Chapter, therefore, of this very brief Epistle the writer exhibits to us exactly what we know St. Peter would have been likely to say under similar circumstances. His exhortations and warnings all tend towards a practical end in our lives, and his examples to illustrate the evil effects of unsound doctrine are such as shew not so much the faultiness of lessons as those wicked *practices* which are the certain fruits of wicked teachings.

We have noticed, further, how much the keen-sighted St. Peter makes use of and reference to the eyes as the great vehicles of instruction. This peculiarity we also find in the writer of the Second Epistle. With him (Chap. i. 9) the man who lacketh those signs of Christian advancement which the writer is there enumerating, such as faith, virtue, knowledge, and the like, "*is blind, and cannot see afar off*." And as in the First Epistle so here, one ground of the writer's claim to be heard is (Chap. i. 16), "we were *eye-witnesses* of his majesty." And when he needs a simile whereto to liken the word of

prophecy, it is to a "*light that shineth* in a dark place" that he compares it, and the full appreciation of the meaning of prophecy shall arrive "when the *day shall dawn*, and the *day star arise* in your hearts." So, too, with the overthrow of the Cities of the Plain it is (Chap. ii. 6) that they may be an *ensample* (ἐν-ό-δειγμα)—a thing at which men may look and point, and by such visible demonstration of God's wrath be warned against evil-doings and the evil teachings which lead to them. It is (Chap. ii. 8) "in *seeing* and hearing the unlawful deeds of his neighbours that just Lot vexed his righteous soul from day to day." And as the eye may be the organ through which good is learnt, so, when perverted, it may be made the instrument of evil; and this our writer feels and expresses when he speaks (Chap. ii. 14) of "eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin." And, lastly, it is to a manifestation of Christ's coming, which *they can see*, from its evidence in the dissolving heavens and melting elements, that he points (Chap. iii. 10-12) his readers by way of exhortation that they may be prepared; and it is for similar ocular demonstration that he makes the scoffers ask (Chap. iii. 4), when they exclaim, "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." It is worthy of notice also, in connection with this feature of the writer's style, how apt he is to choose words as descriptive of evil or good which indicate an appeal to sight as the judge. Thus it is "*without spot*" that he exhorts (Chap. iii. 14) his hearers to strive to be found in the day of the Lord, and in Chap. i. 9 the

sinner is spoken of as "*purged* from his old sins." He describes (Chap. ii. 10) the wicked as "walking in the lust of *uncleanness*," and (Chap. ii. 13) as "*spots and blemishes*" in the Christian body. That from which they are to escape by the knowledge of Christ is "the *pollutions* of the world," and if they turn again to their evil ways, they are described by that terrible similitude "the sow that was washed" going once more "to her wallowing in the mire."

But in this Second Epistle there is another faculty to which appeal is frequently made by the writer, and which finds place most fitly in this Epistle which claims to be written by one who knew he must shortly put off the tabernacle of the flesh; and this faculty is Memory. Long before the time when Kephalos explained to Socrates (Plato, *Repub.* 1, 2) that only the young could take part in the active scenes of life, and that he, and men advanced in age like him, must be content with indulging the memory of bygone times and actions, memory was the resource of advancing years, and has made Horace's old man (*Ars Poetica*, 173) to be "*laudator temporis acti se puero*." Now it is extremely remarkable how strongly this comes out in the Epistle with which we are at present engaged. To St. Peter, with whom seeing meant doing, loss of sight would, of course, be the image most suggestive for expressing a state of spiritual deadness; and we have seen that the writer of the Second Epistle employs that simile, saying (Chap. i. 9) that such a one "is blind, and cannot see afar off;" but he goes on to add, what we venture to think marks very forcibly the later life and advanced

years of the writer, that that other faculty on which the aged dwell more than on sight, is failing also, and the man "hath forgotten¹ that he was purged from his old sins." As memory, therefore (which always survives the apprehensive qualities), played a large part with the writer in his advancing years, so he naturally dwells on it in addressing his disciples. "He will not be negligent (Chap. i. 12) to put them always in *remembrance* of these things, though they know them." "Yea, he thinks it meet" (Chap. i. 13) "to stir them up by putting them in *remembrance*," "that they may be able" (Chap. i. 15) "after his decease to have these things always in *remembrance*." And when he is about to bring his Letter to a close, after having quoted the sad examples by which he desired his hearers to be influenced and warned, he again becomes emphatic in the same strain. "This second epistle," he writes (Chap. iii. 1), "I now write, in which I stir up your pure minds by way of *remembrance*, that ye may be *mindful* of the words which were spoken by the prophets," and by us. This frequent appeal to memory suits so admirably the circumstances of old age, under which the author professes himself to be writing, and is so exactly what we should expect from St. Peter, whose failing powers of vision would drive him, as Chaucer puts it, to see

"With eyen of the mynde,
With which men seën after they ben blynde"
(*"Man of Law's Tale,"* 454),

that though it might not be of great weight were

¹ The expression is unique, *λίθην λαβών*, and might be rendered, "has willingly suffered an oblivion."

it standing alone, it becomes a coincidence of considerable evidential value when combined with all else that can be said in favour of the genuineness of this Letter.

To proceed. The writer of this Second Epistle, if he be not St. Peter, must have noticed that that apostle was greatly given to employ in his language words which occurred rarely and in many cases never in the other writings of the New Testament. And not only must he have noticed this singularity, but he has imitated it in a very remarkable manner. To do the first of these things, to observe a peculiarity, is possible for many persons; but the faculty of close imitation herein is given to but very few; and especially such an imitation as this is found on examination to be. For its character is most unexpected. If we set ourselves to imagine what would be the course of action which an imitator, who desired to produce an Epistle that should pass for the work of St. Peter, would pursue, we should fancy it something like this. He would be certain to introduce largely into his composition those unusual words which he knew St. Peter had already employed. The unique words of the first letter would no longer be allowed to be unique, but would be reproduced in the new Epistle. The writer might have introduced other rare words of his own, but he would certainly have had the larger proportion of them of such a kind as to point to the writer of the First Epistle as the writer of the Second. Such words alone would seem to a forger likely to establish a belief in his identity with St. Peter. For how could he or his readers tell what unusual

words the apostle himself might have introduced into a second letter? St. Peter, with his peculiar turn of mind, could and would have chosen language like in character, though unlike in words, to that which he had employed on a former occasion; but the imitator must import largely from what was acknowledged as the work of the apostle if he would make his forgery pass current as an apostolic Epistle. Now, in reality, we have in the Second Epistle such a composition as we can understand, if it be St. Peter's own work. The Letter abounds, as did the first, with *ἄπαξ λεγόμενα*, and also with words of rare occurrence, but hardly any of the rare words are the same as those found in the Epistle which is admitted to be the production of the apostle. We submit that this is very unlike the work which an imitator would have put forward. Such a man might very well have chosen a set of peculiar words, and have made a point of introducing them into his letter. But he would assuredly have thought, "How will this help my claim to apostolic authorship? I must, at least, have a considerable sprinkling of St. Peter's peculiar expressions in my letter if I wish my work to impress the world with the idea that it came from the pen of that apostle." This we venture to suggest is what an imitator would have thought, and his action would have been in accordance therewith. But it is what the writer of the Second Epistle of St. Peter has not done, though his work is studded, like that writer's first Letter, with unique words and expressions of rare occurrence.

Nor will a more particular examination of these

words of rare occurrence be without its teaching. We shall by this means see that they are, for the most part, of that expressive, and often picturesque, character which prevailed among the unique and rare words of the earlier Letter. We have not far to go for an example. In Chap. i. 1 we find the phrase, "that have obtained the like precious faith with us." Perhaps this is all that a readable translation could effect, but it comes far short of giving the idea conveyed by the unique original *ισότιμος*. That word, which is represented in the English by *like precious*, implies "valued, or purchased, at the same price." There is a danger, as we read over our English version, of disjoining *like* from *precious*, and understanding it merely in the sense of *the same*, whereas to attain to the meaning of the author we must combine most closely *like-precious* into one word, and then the reader is reminded, as the writer intended he should be, of the price which has been paid to redeem *all men alike*, and that, as St. Paul has it (1 Cor. vi. 20), we are not our own, but are bought with a price, and that same price paid for each one among us; and that as the Lord, who purchased us all unto Himself, is one, so the faith of us all should be one likewise. The expression "precious *promises*" (Chap. i. 4, and again Chap. iii. 13) brings in a form of the word for *promises* unknown in the New Testament except in this Epistle. A good instance of the vivid and pictorial character which the writer has communicated to the language of this Epistle is seen if we turn to Chap. i. 19. There we read, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy;

whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a *light* that shineth in a *dark* place, until the day *dawn*, and the *day star* arise in your hearts." But when we turn to the Original we notice that the word for *light* is *λύχνος*, and that means, not merely a *light* but a *lamp*. And there is no small difference in the ideas conveyed by the two words. A light may shine into a dark place; but if it only come in through an aperture from without, we cannot divert its rays to any part which we desire to see, and there may be large portions of the space into which little or none of its illumination can pervade. But with a lamp it is different. You can carry it with you; you can use it at every step; you can bring its light to bear on any point you please; you can hold it forward before you, and see by its aid every part to which you are approaching. And this is the use which the writer considers his readers should make of the word of prophecy, and that, if rightly employed, its guidance would be found more sure even than that message from heaven which they who were eye-witnesses of the Transfiguration had made known.¹ It would prove a light unto their feet and a lantern to their path. For it is as wanderers in a dark and dismal road that he pictures himself and his fellow-pilgrims. And there is much more contained in *ἀνχμηρός* than is brought forth by our English

¹ St. Peter is of course speaking in this passage only of his own personal testimony in comparison with the word of prophecy. And the institution of such a comparison supplies us with an undesigned evidence of the comparatively early date of our Epistle. Had there been any considerable collection of Christian books already formed, the author would have placed them much more on a level with the writings of the prophets. But as there was no such collection, the prophetic writings are still to him "the more sure word."

word *dark*. Its primary sense is one of *drought* and *parched land*. With this meaning are at once connected the ideas of *dust*, *squalor*, and *misery*, and through these gradations there is imported into the word its later signification of *gloom* and *darkness*. By the use of his unique word the writer has set before us a picture of the world as the Christian must regard it,—nay, as all must feel it to be, if they value it for itself alone. It is a barren cheerless desert, through which we have a journey to make, but the intricacies and difficulties of which continually perplex us, and which is sure to be full of miseries and discomforts except where it is enlightened with brightness from above. But there is a day of glorious splendour to come, and how it will differ from what has been, the writer depicts for us by the verb which he next makes use of. That day is not merely to *dawn*: *διαυγάζειν* (a word again peculiar to this Epistle) implies a thorough illumination, a shining through and through. No longer any dark corners, into which we are forced to carry the lamp of prophecy that we may obtain thereby some degree of guidance, but a perfect blaze of brilliant light, whereby the *φωσφόρος* (a word unique again), the Light-bearer, shall shed illumination into the dark places of our hearts, where the light is so sorely needed. Read with the expansions which such fuller translation gives, the verse we are considering conveys some such sense as this: “You do wisely to take heed above all things to the word of prophecy; like a lantern it will give you light at each step through the gloom and misery and defilement of the world, and relieve of their difficulty many of the hard problems which your life’s journey

will force upon you. In this wise should it be used till the clearer daylight, which is coming, pour its floods of brightness upon you, and the Bringer of day shine forth in your hearts." There is much in this passage which partakes of that picturesqueness of speech which we have seen to prevail in all the utterances of St. Peter. Both the gloom and the brightness, through the words by which they are described, have certain pictorial characteristics superadded to them such as seem to be inseparable from St. Peter's descriptions. Word-painting was natural to the apostle, and it appears to have been no less so to the writer of this Epistle. Wherever there is an opportunity for indulging such a tendency of speech, there it is sure to present itself. In the next verse (Chap. i. 20) he says: "No prophecy of scripture is of any private *interpretation*." But he does not employ the ordinary New Testament term for *interpretation*, which elsewhere is ἐρμηνεύω, and its various derivatives and compounds. No, he chooses a word of his own, and writes ἐπιλυσις, that is, an *untying*. The pictorial character of the word is seen at once. There are hard knots in the utterances which God puts into the mouths of his prophets, which they themselves had not the power of untying. This is exactly as we should have expected St. Peter to speak, and exactly as St. Mark does speak in Chap. iv. 34, where he employs the verb ἐπιλύω, to which ἐπιλυσις belongs: "When they were alone he expounded [literally, untied] all things to his disciples," a sense in which no other writer in the New Testament has employed this word.

[*Here we must pause for a month.*—ED.]

J. RAWSON LUMBY.

DR. PULSFORD ON EPHESIANS.¹

DR. PULSFORD'S discourses can hardly be termed "expository" in the technical, or indeed in any accurate, sense of the word. They are rather meditations suggested by the words of St. Paul than a careful and logical explication of the order and flow of his thoughts. But these meditations are such as might be expected from the author of "*Quiet Hours*"—thoughtful and provocative of thought, pitched in a high spiritual key, and now and then, if not "wonderful," at least "mystic." Here and there, however, the author's high meditative tone is marred, not by colloquialisms—for nothing is more effective than a good colloquialism wisely used—but by vulgar and jarring colloquialisms; and indeed the great fault of the book is an air of pretence, an affectation of singularity, which comes out not only in the selection and collocation of his words, but even in the very shape of the volume, in its quite unnecessary marginal annotations, in its immoderate use of capital letters, and in its peculiar and lawless punctuation.

¹ "Christ and His seed: Central to all Things: being a Series of Expository Discourses in Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians." By John Pulsford. London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co.

THE BOOK OF *JOB*.

III.—THE FIRST COLLOQUY. (CHAPTERS IV.—XIV.)

(2.) *JOB* TO ELIPHAZ. (CHAPTERS VI. AND VII.)

THERE is, as I have already said, far more of logic in *Job*'s replies to the arguments and reproaches of the Friends than is commonly discerned in them. We must not, however, expect from an ancient Oriental the dialectical forms and subtleties of the modern schools of the West. Still less must we expect that *Job* should confine himself to a logical refutation of the arguments of his Friends, since he was carrying on a far deeper controversy than that in which he engaged with them. Behind and above them he saw Him who is invisible, so that he was for ever breaking away from his discussion with them in order to appeal to his invisible Antagonist and to force from Him, if it were possible, some response to his appeal. Least of all must we expect from him logical and well-reasoned replies to the assaults of the Friends *at the outset* of this great argument; for, at the outset, his mind is preoccupied and perturbed by the strange bitter fact that even *they* had turned against him,—that even those who knew him best were suspecting and condemning him. At such a moment, and under the stress of this amazing

discovery, he had little heart for weighing the forms which their suspicions and censures assumed, or for considering how he might best rebut them. That the very friends to whom he confidently looked for sympathy should suspect him of some hidden but heinous sin, and cherish this suspicion right in the teeth of all they knew of him—this was enough, and more than enough, to occupy his thoughts; on what grounds they based their assumption he did not care too curiously to inquire. Hence, in his reply to Eliphaz, though at first (Chap. vi. 2–13) he does in some sort take up their censures and reply to them; though, throughout, he bears them so far in mind as that he permits them, directly or indirectly, to prescribe the general course and bent of his thoughts, he breaks off, first (verses 14–30), to make a passionate assault on the Friends, in which he affirms that their lack of sympathy with him implies a hardness of nature, a guilt beyond any which they have assumed in him; and then (Chap. vii. 1–21) to indulge in a new outburst of misery and despair, in which, forgetting all about the Friends, he challenges the equity of God, his real though unseen Antagonist, and demands death as the sole remedy of sufferings such as his.

“And yet, the pity of it, the pity of it!” Had his human friends but taken a more friendly and sympathetic tone he might never have questioned the equity and kindness of his Divine Friend. For, after all, it was mainly a question of tone; there is little to blame in the substance of Eliphaz’s address. As delicately as a man well could he had intimated

that even the best of men is but a man at the best ; that if Job *had* provoked and deserved his afflictions, it was only through a frailty common to the whole human race ; and that, possibly, his afflictions sprang not more from his sins than from the Divine mercy, and came on him mainly that he might know the blessedness of the man whom God correcteth. Had Eliphaz, instead of rebuking the impatience and despair which Job—in the Curse—expressed under his unparalleled miseries, sympathetically entered into those miseries ; had he even admitted that Job's veiled complaint against the God who had given him life was just so long as he conceived God to be hostile to him, and entreated him not to assume that God was hostile simply because He afflicted him, since correction was a sign of love as well as of anger, Job would have been comforted by his Friend's unabated faith in him ; by his kindness and compassion he might have been enabled to hold fast his confidence in the compassion and kindness of Jehovah. But to be suspected, condemned even, to have his guilt assumed by those to whom he looked for pity and solace, was more than he could brook. Not only did their assumption of his guilt and their covert insinuation of it provoke him to anger, to self-justification, to the demand,

“ Make me to see 't ; or at the least so prove it
That the probation bear no hinge or loop
To hang a doubt on ; ”

but, losing faith in the friendliness, in the very justice, of man, he also well-nigh lost all faith in the justice and friendliness of God.

CHAPTERS VI. AND VII.

CHAP. VI. 1.—*Then answered Job and said :*

2. *Would that my passion were duly weighed,
And that my misery were laid in the balance against it !*
3. *For then would it be heavier than the sand of the sea :
Therefore have my words been wild.*
4. *Lo, the arrows of the Almighty are in me,
And their venom drinketh up my spirit ;
The terrors of God array themselves against me.*
5. *Doth the wild ass bray over the grass,
Or loweth the ox over his fodder ?*
6. *Can the insipid be eaten without salt,
Or is there savour in the white of an egg ?*
7. *My soul refuseth to touch them ;
They are as food which I loathe.*
8. *O that I might have my request,
That God would grant me the thing that I long for,—*
9. *Even that God would please to crush me,
That He would let loose his hand and tear me off !*
10. *Yet this would still be my solace,
And I would exult, even under the pain which spareth not,
That I have not denied the words of the Holy One.*
11. *But what is my strength that I should hope,
And what my term that I should still be patient ?*
12. *Is my strength the strength of stones ?
Is my flesh brass ?*
13. *Is not my help gone,
And resource quite driven from me ?*
14. *A friend should pity the afflicted,
Lest he forsake the fear of the Almighty ;*
15. *But my brethren have become treacherous as a torrent,
Like the streams of the wady that pass away,
That become turbid with ice,
And in which the snow is dissolved :*
17. *What time they wax warm they vanish ;
When it is hot, they are dried up out of their place :*
18. *The caravans divert their track,
They go up into the desert and perish ;*
19. *The caravans of Tema looked,
The merchants of Sheba hoped for them :*

20. *They were ashamed that they had trusted,
They came up to them and blushed.*
21. *Even so, now, ye are nought ;
Ye see a terror and are terrified.*
22. *Is it that I said, ' Confer a boon upon me ;'
Or, ' Of your substance offer a gift on my behalf ;'*
23. *Or, ' Rescue me from the hand of an adversary ;'
Or, ' Ransom me from the hand of the violent ?'*
24. *Teach me, and I will be mute,
And make clear to me wherein I have erred.*
25. *How forcible are honest rebukes !
But what doth your reproof reprove ?*
26. *Think ye to reprove words !
But the words of the desperate are for the wind.*
27. *Ye would even cast lots on the orphan,
And traffic over a friend.*
28. *Now, therefore, be pleased to look upon me :
I shall not surely lie to your face !*
29. *Come again, now : let there be no unfairness :
Come again : still is my cause just.*
30. *Is there any unfairness in my tongue ?
Cannot my palate discriminate that which is wrong ?*

CHAP. VII. I.—*Hath not man a term of hard service on earth,*

- And are not his days like the days of a hireling ?*
2. *Like a slave who panteth for the shade,
And like a hireling who waiteth for his wage.*
3. *So months of vanity have been made my heritage,
And nights of weariness have been allotted to me.*
4. *If I lay me down, I say, ' When shall I arise ?'
And the night lengtheneth itself out ;
I am full of tossings until daybreak.*
5. *With vermin and an earthy crust is my flesh clad ;
My skin stiffeneth, and then dischargeth.*
6. *My days glide swifter than a shuttle,
And come to a close without hope.*
7. *O remember that my life is but a breath,
That mine eye will never again see good !*
8. *The eye that seeth me shall see me no more :
Thine own eyes shall look for me, but I shall not be.*
9. *As a cloud when it dissolveth is gone,
So he that goeth down to Hades cometh up no more ;*

10. *No more shall he revisit his home,
Neither shall his place know him any more.*
11. *Therefore I will not curb my mouth,
In the anguish of my spirit will I speak ;
I will make my plaint in the bitterness of my soul.*
12. *Am I a sea, or a monster,
That Thou settest a watch upon me ?*
13. *When I say, ' My couch shall comfort me,
My bed may assuage my pain,'*
14. *Then Thou scarest me with dreams,
And terrifiest me with visions,*
15. *So that my soul maketh choice of strangling
And of death rather than a life like mine.*
16. *I waste away. I shall not live long.
Let me alone ; for my days are but a vapour.*
17. *What is man that Thou shouldst prize him,
And set thine heart upon him ;*
18. *That Thou shouldest visit him morning by morning,
And try him moment by moment ?*
19. *How long wilt Thou not look away from me,
Nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle !*
20. *I have sinned ! yet what have I done to Thee,
O Thou Watcher of men ?
Why hast Thou made me thy stumbling-block
So that I am become a burden unto myself ?*
21. *And why wilt Thou not pardon my transgression,
And cause my sin to pass away ?
For I must soon lay me in the dust :
Thou shalt seek me, but I shall not be.*

In Chapter vi. 2-13 we have Job's real answer to the argument of Eliphaz. This wise and devout Temanite had opened (Chapter iv. 2-11) with a reproof of the wild and excessive passion — passionate and uncontrolled expressions of emotion being always a grave offence to the Oriental mind — exhibited by Job, and had even intimated that passion so unbridled threw some doubt on his inte-

grity. If he were pious, should not his piety be a stay to him now? If he were upright, could he be so hopeless and despairing? As he went on, he had once more harped on this string (Chap. v. 2), censuring "passion" as a mark of impiety and "indignation" as a proof of folly. To this censure Job replies in his opening words. (Compare Chap. vi. 2 with Chap. v. 2.) He affirms that his "passion" was perfectly consistent with his integrity, since it was not out of proportion to his "misery,"—the word here used for "misery" being a peculiar one, and denoting, as Schultens has pointed out, "an abysmal and boundless misery." If this profound and immeasurable misery were *laid* or *lifted*—the Hebrew verb indicates its *weight*—into the balance against it; if the misery and the passion were placed in opposite scales, the misery would be found immeasurably the heavier of the two, heavier even than that proverbial indication of the countless and immeasurable, "the sand of the sea." He justifies his passion, therefore, as only the natural expression of a misery so profound. Yet he confesses that his words have been "wild," or "hot;" and pleads in excuse for it that his very spirit within him has been dried up, absorbed, by the poison shot into it by the arrows of the Almighty, so that he is no longer master whether of himself or of his words. (Chapter vi. 3 and 4). He pleads still further that "the terrors of God," *i.e.* all the terrors which even Jehovah can summon up and combine together, have advanced in battle array against him, so that his struggles, however "wild," and his outcries, however "hot," are but the natural and instinctive motions of

a soul exposed to the onset and siege of a host so vast, potent, irresistible.

How natural his outcries and complaints are he illustrates by citing two proverbs (*Verses 5 and 6*). No creature complains without cause; so long as he has a due and meet supply of his needs the ass does not bray over his grass, nor the ox low over his fodder; they cry out only when they lack food, when they suffer want or pain. And, on the other hand, every creature complains at and refuses with disgust that which is contrary to its nature, which does not really meet its wants,—insipid or loathsome food, for instance. “Is it likely, then,” he argues, “that *I* cry out without cause? Do not the very wildness and violence of my outcries indicate the extremity of misery to which I am reduced?” It seemed to him that his natural cravings had been crossed, that all savour and joy had gone out of his life; that to be shut up to a life so full of loss and misery and shame was like being set down to a loathsome and diseased food which his soul disdained (*Verse 7*).¹

As he once more contemplates the life which has been assigned him, his old impatience comes back

¹ The weight of modern authority preponderates so heavily for the reading of *Verses 6 and 7* given in the text, that I feel compelled to bow to it. At the same time much might be said in favour of the older interpretation, which saw in them Job's revulsion from the kind of consolation pressed upon him by Eliphaz as the spokesman of the Friends. There is nothing in the Hebrew to render such an interpretation impossible, or even forced. And while I yield to the authority which gives the preference to the later reading, I for myself still prefer the former. It seems to me that we reach the more natural sense of the words when we take them as expressing the impulse of scorn quickened in the breast of Job by the insipid and unwelcome moralizing of the Friends, of the disgust which their “solemn and im-

on him, and once more he virtually curses his day. Eliphaz had threatened him with death (Chap. iv. 19-21, and Chap. v. 2), as the last of ills, should he refuse to submit himself to the correction of the Almighty. Job retorts that this last of ills is now his first and only hope, that it is the one and only consolation left him (Chap. vi. 8-10). In a charming flow of beautiful and tender figures Eliphaz had promised him a restoration to the Divine favour if he would but accept the chastening of the Lord (Chap. v. 17-26); and now (Chap. vi. 11-13) Job declares that it is too late for him to indulge such a hope as that; he is out of love with life, and would not "stretch out his spirit" toward happier and wealthier conditions, even if he could.

The one thing he longs for (*Verses 8-10*) is that God would bring his life and sufferings to an end; for he still holds fast his integrity, and could therefore meet death without fear or shame. It is not simply that he desires extinction; but he desires it while yet he is unconscious of having denied, or renounced, the words of the Holy One. Into what sins a life of shame and misery may plunge him he pertinent prosing" excited in him. I admit, indeed, that to take them in this sense causes a break in the continuity of Job's thoughts; but such sudden changes and revulsions of mood are characteristic of him, as they are of every man who speaks under the pressure of excessive passion, of extreme misery or pain. And surely nothing could be more true to nature than that Job should hold the words of Eliphaz, in so far as they were true, to be as insipid and savourless as the white of an egg eaten without salt, because not pertinent to his case; and that, in so far as they hinted suspicion of his guilt—in so far, that is, as they were not true—he should regard them as a loathsome and poisonous food against which his gorge rose, "which his soul refused so much as to touch." So that while I defer to the authority of far better scholars than myself, I do so somewhat reluctantly, and as one who would like their verdict to be reconsidered.

cannot tell ; but as yet he has no fear, no such sense of sin as would lead him to fear standing before God and being called to account for all his actions to Him. Hence he would "exult"—literally, "leap and dance for joy"—under the most unsparing pain, the keenest torture, were he only assured that it would put an end to his existence. Whatever death was, and meant, there could be nothing terrible in it to one who had a conscience void of offence toward God and man.

No other hope than that of death is left him (*Verse 11*) ; all expectation of recovery was lost ; he must soon succumb to his terrible malady. If there was nothing to fear in the future, assuredly there was nothing in the present to regret. What conceivable "end," or "term," was before him, that he should "still be patient"—literally, "still stretch out his spirit," as one who hoped to tide over a dark interval and pass on into a happy future ? He was not made of stone, or of brass (*Verse 12*), that he could hope to come unscathed through such fiery and searching trouble. All "help" from within was gone, all the inward springs of life were exhausted ; and all "resource," all power of rallying from his exhaustion (*Verse 13*). It was vain to talk to him of recovery and restoration to the providential favour of God ; he was past all that : his life was shattered and poisoned to the very centre, his hope plucked up from the very root.

Thus far, then, the reply of Job is logical enough ; he has taken up the leading points of the argument of Eliphaz and answered them. Eliphaz had reproached him with excess of passion ; Job replies

that his passion was immeasurably less than his misery. Eliphaz, however gently, had intimated his conviction that the calamities of Job were the consequence and punishment of some great sin, though perchance his sin had sprung only from the frailty he shared with all men; and Job replies that he has never consciously and wilfully "denied the words," *i.e.* disobeyed the commands, of God. Eliphaz had invited him to repentance and confession, in order that through these he might rise into an ampler and more enduring happiness; and Job replies, both that he has nothing to confess and that the very desire for recovery to happier conditions has died out of him, that he loathes life however fair it may be, and longs only for the death which others fear.

And, now, having disposed of the arguments of Eliphaz, having repulsed the assault which the Friends, through Eliphaz, had made on him, he, in his turn, delivers (in *Verses* 14-30) an assault on them. He charges them with having been wanting in common humanity, with having condemned him for sins of which he is innocent, and challenges them to speak out to his face, if they can and dare, the accusation which in their hearts they prefer against him.

Job starts with a general and admitted principle (*Verse* 14). Pity, compassionate kindness, should be shewn by his friend to one who lies *all dissolved in affliction* (such is the force of the Hebrew for "the afflicted"), "lest he forsake the fear of the Almighty," or "because he is in danger of forsaking" that fear. The Original will admit of either sense. Whichever we take, the thought at the bottom of the verse is the

same, viz. that under the pressure of great calamity a man is likely to lose his confidence in the sympathy of God unless his faith in God be reinforced by the sympathy and kindness of man; and that, therefore, his friends should deal gently with him and shew him all the kindness they can, and thus save him from altogether losing touch with God. "*You have violated this admitted principle of conduct,*" says Job to his Friends; "*you have failed in the supreme duty of friendship, and so have made it hard for me to hold fast my trust in the Friend.*"

This charge he elaborates in the figure of *Verses* 15-20. He compares his "brethren" to a treacherous torrent which promises a succour it does not yield. But no sooner is the torrent mentioned than the Poet sets himself to achieve another of those literary feats of which we have already seen a sample in Chap. iv. 10, 11.¹ Or, rather, no sooner does he light on this simile than he *sees* the torrent rushing and foaming down its rough stone-strewed bed; and with his quick love of all that is picturesque he is drawn on to paint a finished and elaborate picture of what he so vividly perceives. With admirable precision he seizes on the main features in the appearance and functions of such a water-course as he had in his eye; and with astonishing power he compels them each and all to contribute to the moral he had it at heart to enforce. That he took the imagery of this passage from the Hauran is probable enough; for, like many other districts in the East, the Hauran is intersected by deep ravines, *wadys*, which, while they are for the most part dry,

¹ See the comment on that passage.

are filled to overflowing when rain falls on the neighbouring heights. In summer no river waters the land; though in a few of the wadys a little surface water may trickle down from pool to pool; but in winter the land is alive with sudden and violent torrents. The streams of the wady *are* treacherous, therefore; they do "pass away:" in the winter months they become "black," or "turbid," with ice and with the snows which slip into them from the hills and precipices between which they run. Full and noisy when they are little in request, in the cold months, when travellers are few: when it waxes warm, and caravans frequent the roads, the waters "dry up," evaporate, and "vanish," leaving only heaps of shingle or piles of boulders, though the banks of the wadys still attract the unwary traveller by their unusual verdure and brightness. Even the caravans of travelled and experienced traders go out of their way, "divert their track," in order to drink and to fill their water-skins at some of these torrent-beds in which an occasional pool may be found, and "perish" in the desert to which they return for lack of the water they vainly hoped to find in it. Nor is the Poet content with the mention of caravans in general. He must throw in a touch of local colour by instancing the caravans of Tema and of Sheba,—Tema, to the north of the Hauran, the seat of a clan of wandering Ishmaelites, and Sheba far away to the south, the emporium of those wealthy "merchants" of whom we have already heard as adding to their wealth by raids on distant lands as well as by traffic with most of the larger cities of the East.¹ These caravans,

¹ See comment on Chap. i. 15.

known familiarly to the Hauranites, since they frequented the great road from Damascus to Egypt, are adduced to exemplify the fate of all travellers who "trust" to these treacherous streams. They are "ashamed" to have put their trust in that which had often failed them before, in which experience should have forbidden them to confide.

Having thus elaborated the simile, lingering over it, and adding touch to touch, the Poet represents Job (*Verse 21*) as hurling it, with its accumulated force, at the Friends: "Even so now, ye are nought,"—are "gone to nothing," like the torrent. "I looked to you for comfort, as the caravans to the stream; my very life, like theirs, hanging on the issue: and, like them, I looked in vain. Ye have seen a terror, and are terrified:" *i.e.* "Ye have seen the abject and ghastly condition to which I have been reduced, and, instead of succouring me, ye have shrunk away from me in dismay."

I have spoken of the astonishing power with which the Poet, while elaborating his simile, compelled every feature of it to contribute to the moral he had in his mind: and it may be worth while to point out how exactly every touch of his description finds an analogy in the conduct of the Friends. The stream of the wady rolls in a boiling and resounding torrent in the winter, when it is little needed by men; and so Job's friends had been loud and profuse in their professions when he was "great before all the Sons of the East" and had no need of their help. Even in the summer, when the torrent is dried up, it holds out a promise of succour in the bright and abounding verdure of its margins; and so the

Friends, when they first came to visit Job in his affliction, seemed so full of a tender and considerate kindness that he had been drawn on to throw off all reserve and, by uttering his despair, to solicit their sympathy. The torrent cheated and mocked those who had trusted in it, yielding them no succour when they most craved it; and in like manner the Friends had disappointed the confident hopes which Job had reposed in them. For the caravans who had been cheated by the treacherous torrent there was nothing left but to return to the desert and die; and, in like manner, now that his Friends had failed him, Job felt as he shrank back into his misery that no resource was left him, that his sole prospect was death, his one longing a sudden and immediate death.

Verses 22, 23.—As he had looked to the Friends for nothing but sympathy, he is the more betrayed. It was not much that he had asked of them; they might have granted his prayer, and been none the poorer for it. With bitter irony he expatiates on this thought, acknowledging that it might have been unreasonable of him had he counted on them for any costly or impoverishing proof of friendship, and reproaching them that, when he had asked nothing but “the simple boon of pity,” even that slight strain on their friendship had proved too severe.

Verse 24.—As they have no pity, no sympathy, to give, let them at least convict him of the sin which has averted it. Let them openly charge him with the transgression which they had covertly insinuated against him, which Eliphaz had assumed throughout without a shadow of proof, and in which, no doubt,

both Bildad and Zophar by their looks and bearing had intimated their concurrence. Let them, if they can do no more for him, at least "make clear wherein he has erred."

Verse 25.—There is nothing he more heartily respects than to be plainly taught and honestly reproved; but what is their covert and evasive insinuation of guilt meant to convey?

Verse 26.—Are the "wild" words of his curse the sin that shuts up their bowels of compassion against him? Pshaw! The words of a man crazed with misery are no proof of guilt, no sufficient ground for suspicion and rebuke. Idle as the wind, they should be left for the wind to blow away.

Verse 27.—Men who would make him an offender for "the wild and whirling words" of his curse were capable of any baseness. They must be pitiless as men who should enslave an orphan for his dead father's debt, and then cast lots whose he should be, —as pitiless and inhuman as men who would barter away their best friend for pelf; for were they not trying to gain an added reputation for wisdom and piety, or an added sense of their own piety and wisdom, by condemning the assumed follies and sins of their friend?

In *Verses 28–30* he once more challenges them to speak out in plain blunt terms the charge which they have been ambiguously giving out. Let them look him in the eyes, and say whether he is so wanting in moral sense and honesty as to lie to their face, by asserting that he is innocent when he knows himself to be guilty.

To explain the repeated "Return," or "Come

again," of *Verse* 29, Renan supposes that, stung by the irony and keen reproaches of Job, the Friends had made a movement to retire. But there is no need for such a supposition. The meaning of the phrase seems to be that, still daring them to be open and sincere with him, Job affirms that, "come" as often as they will, renew their investigation as often and carry it as deeply as they may, they will still find "his cause just," still find "that the right is in it,"¹ if only they come without prejudice, without assuming the guilt they are bound to prove.

In *Verse* 30 "the tongue" and "the palate"—*i.e.* the sense of taste is used by a common Oriental metaphor for the moral sense, the power to discern good and evil. What Job demands of the Friends is whether they believe his moral sense to be so perverted that he can no longer discriminate right from wrong. On no other hypothesis can he account for their assuming him to be guilty of sins of which he feels and avows himself to be innocent. Why do they not accept his assertion of his integrity? Can they look him in the face and affirm either that he is wilfully deceiving them, or that he no longer knows himself?

There are both resemblances and differences between Chapters vi. and vii. In Chapter vi., as we have seen, Job addresses himself to the Friends, (1) replying with logical force and directness to the arguments of Eliphaz, and (2) breaking out into keen reproach against the men who professed so

¹ So Ewald translates "noch hab' ich Recht darin;" and Heiligstedt, "adhuc justitia me in eo (ea re) est, adhuc causa mea justa est."

much love for him, but shewed so little. In Chapter vii. he addresses himself to God, (1) at first (verses 1-11) indirectly, stating his case to Him and appealing for compassion; and (2) then (verses 12-21) directly, breaking out into passionate reproaches against the God who could listen to his appeal unmoved. So that, in form, Chapter vii. corresponds very closely with Chapter vi. *There* he first argued with his Friends, and then reproached them; *here* he first argues with Jehovah, and then reproaches Him. This is the main resemblance between the two. The main difference between them is that, while Chapter vi. has more of the form of a reply to the argument of the Friends, Chapter vii. is cast more in the form of a soliloquy, in which, turning from men, Job broods over those sufferings of his soul which were the soul of his sufferings, and cries out both to God and against Him.

But, at first, though he no longer addresses himself to those who sat in the *mezbele* with him, he does not wholly forget them or the rebuke they have uttered by the mouth of Eliphaz. He does wholly forget them in the latter section of the Chapter, the sense of the Divine Presence overshadowing and engrossing his thoughts: but in the earlier section his thoughts are, consciously or unconsciously, shaped by the words to which he had just listened, and that in two ways. Eliphaz had censured Job's craving for death as unreasonable and impious; Job now vindicates it as the only reasonable course left open to him. Eliphaz had drawn (Chap. v. 17-26) a charming and seductive picture of human life, describing the Divine Providence as engaged in sending men rain

and fruitful seasons, as raising the lowly, saving the poor and needy, and causing all things to work together for the good of those who accepted instruction and correction ; and now, over against this bright conception of human life, baseless for the moment to Job as the fabric of a vision, he sets his own dark and lurid conception of it : to him it seems a term of hard service, in which days of toil and weariness alternate with nights of trouble and unrest. As he elaborates his conception we become aware that, though he had the words of Eliphaz in his mind at the outset, he is gradually edging away from him and his fanciful picture of the ways of God with men, turning toward God and sub-audibly appealing to Him, until (at verse 8) the sub-audible appeal becomes audible in the words, "*Thine* own eyes shall look for me, but I shall not be." As if appalled, however, at the sound himself had made, he instantly falls back into an impersonal and indirect tone ; and it is not till he utterly despairs of extorting any response from God by indirect and pitiful appeal that he breaks out, in the second section of the Chapter, into direct and vehement reproaches against the cruelty of God in turning a deaf ear to his supplication. He has cried to Heaven for pity and redress till he is weary ; and as there is neither voice nor any to answer, nor any that regarded, he resolves to let loose his anguish, to pour out all the bitterness of his soul. Perhaps insult and reproach may provoke an attention denied to supplication and appeal. But we must now consider the opening section of this Chapter more in detail.

In *Verses 1-11* Job sets the dark and lurid conception of human life which he had inferred from the facts of experience over against the bright and hopeful conception of it which Eliphaz had spun out of his mere imagination or the baseless assumptions of his theology. He projects his own dark shadow across the whole world of men, or, rather, looking out on them with darkened eyes, he can see nothing but darkness in their lot. On three features in the universal lot of man he lays special emphasis: (1) its misery (verses 1-5); (2) its brevity (verses 6-8); and (3) its irrevocableness (verses 9, 10). That the several counts of his complaint are inconsistent with each other is obvious and undeniable; for if life be so utterly and intensely miserable, why should a man complain either that it is brief, or that, ended once, it is ended for ever? But the very inconsistency of his complaint is but another touch of nature: for men grievously wronged and afflicted are rarely consistent in their complaints; they seize on and brood over every aspect of their condition which will feed their resentment or their grief, and are not careful to harmonize the one with the other.

In *Verse 1* he compares, not his own life simply, but the general life of man, to a term, a hard term, of military service. In *Verse 2* he compares it to the bitter lot of a slave who pants for the shades of evening that he may know a little rest. In each case the figure is heightened in effect by the introduction of the word "hireling." It is the *hired* soldier on hard military duty whom he has in his mind; the soldier, therefore, who is no longer under the command of the chief of his own clan, no longer

serves one who, from mere self-interest, if not from ties of kinship, might take some thought of him : he has been let out to a foreign despot, who little heeds how many men he squanders so that he may win the day. And, in like manner, it is not the domestic slave, but the *hired* slave, whom he has in his mind ; not one who has been born in his master's house, and for whom his master may have a feeling of compassion, or liking, or even of affection, but one that has been let out to a stranger who has no need to spare him to-day that he may be fit for to-morrow's work, and still less any friendly motion of the heart toward him. Job's conception of human life, then, is as bitter and as sombre as it well can be. God appears to him like an alien despot who squanders his soldiers without pity and without remorse on every field ; like an alien taskmaster who spares not to overtask his slaves, but exhausts them with heavy toils, that he may get the utmost possible service out of them during the brief term for which he has hired them, insomuch that they have no thought or hope but only this, "When will the day be done ? when will our term expire ?"

In *Verse 3* Job applies this sombre conception of human life to himself, and finds that it accurately corresponds to his condition. *He* has been made "to inherit months of vanity," "nights of weariness have been allotted him ;"—a very fine verse, full of choice words and epithets. Both the verbs indicate that Job had done nothing to cause, or to deserve, his misery ; it is "a heritage" on which he has been compelled to enter, and which he had done nothing to shape or prepare ; it has been "allotted" him,

without his will, against his will. The epithets in which he describes the misery of his life are equally striking and graphic. No man who has known what it is to have whole days or weeks cut out of his life by some disabling pain of brain or nerve, to be rendered incapable of "aught that wears the name of action," but will enter with keen sympathy into Job's complaint of "months of *vanity*," months, *i.e.* of unreality, months that come and go but leave nothing behind them save a dreary sense of wasted opportunities, months in which a man is rendered unfit for any of the sweet or active uses of life. Nor will any man whose rest is often broken, who is often and long denied the boon of sleep,

"That knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, *sore labour's bath*,
Balm of hurt minds,"

fail to comprehend what he meant by "nights of toil" or of "weariness." Most men have known what it is to long for the light of returning day even as they lie down on a bed that has no rest for them, to feel the night, as he graphically puts it (in *Verse 4*), "*lengthening itself out*," and to lie tossing till daybreak, half persuaded that daybreak will never come.

But, happily, there are very few who will ever know *all* that he endured. For (in *Verse 5*) he adds a new and terrible feature to his misery. Not only is he a slave worn out and spent by intolerable toils by day, and then denied the solace of repose, "*sore labour's bath*," at night; but also he is so terribly unfit for toil and watching, laden as he is and broken down with the languors and disgusts of a

most loathsome disease. The Verse records some sickening symptoms of his strange and terrible disease. As *elephantiasis* develops, ulcers are formed in the body, in which maggots breed; the skin gets hot, dry, rough as it stretches, till it looks like the lumpy and corrugated hide of the elephant. These are the "vermin" and this "the earthy crust" of which he complains; and in these same ulcers, over which the skin stretches and contracts, and then bursts to let out a feculent discharge, we have the explanation of the line,

"My skin stiffeneth, and then dischargeth."

The first verb denotes violent contraction, and the second purulent discharge.

This, then, is Job's description of the misery of human life in general, and of his own life in particular; a misery so great, so indescribable, as to warrant him, at least in his own judgment, in craving for death, even as the weary overtaken slave pants for the shadows of declining day, and the mercenary whose life is lavishly and carelessly exposed longs for the end of his term. In Deuteronomy xxviii. 65-67 we have a still finer and more pathetic description of human life burdened and oppressed with misery, which should be compared with these graphic verses:—"*And among those nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee a trembling heart, and failing eyes, and sorrow of spirit; and thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt fear day and night, and thou shalt not believe in thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were*

even ! and at even, Would God it were morning ! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see."

In *Verse 6* Job turns from the misery to the brevity of human life. He compares it to a weaver's shuttle, "by means of which the weft is shot between the threads of the warp as they are drawn up and down. His days pass as swiftly by as the little shuttle passes backward and forward in the warp."¹ And, quickly as they pass, they "come to a close without hope," *i.e.* without hope of any to succeed them, of any life beyond the present worthy of the name. This point, the brevity of life, is a favourite theme with moralists; but, as usual, Shakespeare beats them easily on their own ground; for what finer moral can be drawn from the brevity of life than that we should use it nobly ?

"O gentlemen, the time of life is short:
To spend that shortness basely were too long
If life did ride upon a dial's point,
Still ending at the arrival of an hour."

In *Verse 7* we have the first sign that the thought of God as present is predominating in the mind of Job, that he has begun to lose sight of the Friends. He does not yet name God, or openly address himself to Him. But his, "O remember that my life is but a breath !" can only be meant for the God whom he has known from his youth, and with whom he has been wont to speak as a man speaketh with his friend.

In *Verse 8* this covert appeal for pity becomes patent. "When my brief life is ended, men will see

¹ Delitzsch *in loco*.

me no more ; and even *Thine* eye shall look for me in vain." All the more significant is it that, with the sense of the Divine Presence full upon him for the moment, his entire conviction that the dead will never be restored to life in this world is balanced—as yet—by no hope of a life beyond that of this world. Nothing can be more hopeless than the tone of *Verses* 9 and 10. Life is like a cloud which, once dissolved, is no more seen. Those who sink into Sheol, the dim Hadean kingdom peopled by the thin ghosts of departed generations, will never revisit the warm upper air. Egyptian tradition had affirmed that if a man were justified in Hades, if he could pass the scrutiny of the final Judge, he might any day come forth from it, "and return to his own house." "Alas, it is not true!" sighs Job. "When once he has gone, no man can so much as *revisit his home*, and see how it fares with his beloved ; his place will know him no more. Life, once lost, is irrevocably lost."

Therefore, as his life, vexed with misery, is fast coming to an end, and there is no hope of justice or compassion beyond the grave, he resolves (*Verse* 11) to "unpack his heart with words." Why should he curb himself? Nothing is to be lost by plain speaking, for he cannot be more wretched than he is ; nothing is to be gained by silent submission, for he has no hope for the future. He will, therefore, speak out the anguish of his spirit and give vent to the bitterness of his soul.

These words introduce the final section of his reply to Eliphaz,—his open complaint of the cruelty of

Jehovah, who will vouchsafe no answer to his solemn and pathetic appeal. And here we must prepare to see Job at his worst; though, even taken at his worst, it is hard to say why he should be singled out as a sinner above other good men. Jeremiah,¹ for example, cries out against God, "Wilt thou be altogether as a liar unto me, and as waters that fail?" And if we can excuse his audacity because of his perplexity, his honesty of intention, his desire to see that God was true though He seemed to be false, why should we condemn Job? He, too, was terribly perplexed; he, too, was honest and sincere; he, too, desired to see that God was true and kind though He seemed false and cruel; he, too, appealed against God only to God Himself. And, bitter as was his complaint, we shall hear from him no words more bold and desperate than we may hear again and again from the prophets of a later age. All that God Himself charges him with is "darkening counsel with words devoid of wisdom," *i.e.* with aggravating his own perplexity and misery by these foolish impulsive outcries: and why should we suspect him of more than this?

The burden of his complaint is, that he is watched and beset on every side as though he were likely to rise in mutiny against God, or as though he had incurred an unpardonable guilt, although he is unconscious of any wilful transgression or of any treasonable design. With sad irony he demands, first, whether in his weakness and misery he can be *formidable* to God, that he is so incessantly dogged and checked and smitten; and, then, with sad indig-

¹ Chap. xv. 18.

nation, he demands whether he, who is unconscious of any wilful fault, can have so *sinned* that his sin cannot be forgiven him.

Verse 12 is patient of two different interpretations. Some commentators remind us that in the Bible (Isa. xix. 5), and they might add in the Coran (Sura xx. 39), the Nile is called a sea; that the rising of the Nile was carefully watched, and its overflow guided and confined by dykes lest it should ravage instead of fertilize the land: and these suppose Job to ask whether, like the Nile, he is so dangerous that he needs to be straightly shut in, or like the monster of the Nile, the fierce untameable crocodile, needs to be watched and ensnared lest he commit havoc and destruction. Others doubt this allusion, and prefer to take the words in a more general sense; and these make Job ask whether he is like the heaven-assaulting ocean to which God Himself had set a bar and gates; or like one of those monstrous

“dragons of the prime
That tare each other in their slime?”

In either case the meaning of the Verse is clear, and Job complains that he, a man, “noble in reason, infinite in faculty,” capable of appreciating and responding to an appeal to conscience and understanding, should be handled roughly and severely as though he were void of sense and reason.

Verses 13 and 14.—No alleviation of his misery, no respite from restraint is allowed him. If he thinks to *share* his pain with his bed, to dull his sense of it in slumber, it only grows more intense and terrible; frightful dreams and visions conspire with the pangs of disease to complete his misery. There

is an allusion here, no doubt, to his malady; for Avicenna says that hideous dreams constantly torment those who suffer from elephantiasis.

So is there also in *Verse 15*; for from the same authority we learn that this disease commonly terminates in suffocation. It is to this that Job refers when he affirms that he is rendered so desperate by his pangs and his hideous dreams as to prefer "*strangling* and death to such a life as his;" literally, to "*such bones* as his;" and here the allusion is to the exposure and rotting of the bones as this dreadful malady eats away the flesh and corrupts the very bones beneath it.

"Let me alone, then," he cries in *Verse 16*, *i.e.* "Depart from me," implying that his life depends on the Divine Presence, that he cannot even die till God withdraw from him. "My days are but an unsubstantial vapour; let it dissolve and pass." Is he—poor, wasted, short-lived wretch that he is—to be treated like the deep, or the monsters of the deep? Is *he* likely to prove formidable to the Almighty Ruler of the universe?

In *Verses 17* and *18* we have the transition to the second point of complaint,—that he is treated as a heinous and unpardonable offender. With bitter irony he wonders that the great Creator of men should so incessantly busy Himself about a creature so mean and frail, as if He set an enormous value on him, as if He could not put him out of his mind, as if He could let no morning pass without coming to inspect him, no moment without putting him to the proof!

This sense of being for ever watched and dogged

and spied upon has grown intolerable to him (*Verse 19*). In his impatience and resentment he cries,

“How long wilt Thou not look away from me,
Nor let me alone *till I swallow down my spittle?*”

the last words being a proverbial expression for the minimum of time, like our “in the twinkling of an eye,” or “while I draw my breath.”

Verse 20.—Granted that I have sinned, as what man is he that sinneth not? yet *in what* have I sinned, sinned *against Thee?* in what part of the duty I owe to Thee have I failed? Tell me that, “O Thou Watcher of men,” or even, “Thou *Spy* upon men!” For the epithet here cast up at God, although not in itself unworthy of Him, is used with a certain bitterness which turns the blessing of God’s watchful and incessant care over men into the irritating curse of espionage.¹ To him it seemed that, by some miserable fatality, he was always in God’s way, that, so to speak, God was always stumbling against or over him, so that his life had become a mere burden to him; and this, not through any fault of his own, but rather from the malicious pleasure which God took in striking him from his path. In short, he felt as we feel when, for no reason in ourselves that we can discover, everything goes wrong with us, and we are perpetually brought into hostile contact with the infinite Power which pervades the universe.

Verse 21.—It was inconceivable to him why the sins of his infirmity—and he was conscious of no wilful and deliberate offence—should not be forgiven

¹ Renan forcibly conveys this sense to the Continental mind by translating the phrase, “*O espion de l’homme.*”

him, why God, who used to be so merciful and compassionate, should make so much of them, and why his appeal for pity and pardon should pass unheard.

"Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer but this two-fold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd, being down?"

He cannot see as yet that many of the calamities which come on men are only undeserved in the sense that men have not and cannot deserve so great a blessing as they contain and disguise ; and as yet he does not see that he is being led on, by a deepened sense of the inequalities of the life that now is, to infer the life to come,—an issue, however, to which every step of the argument is bringing him nearer and nearer.

S. COX.

THE NEW TEACHER ; THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

ST. MATT. IV. 17 ; ST. MARK I. 14-15 ; ST. LUKE IV. 14-32.

JESUS emerged from the desert to enter on his great career as the preacher of "the kingdom of God." The season was the spring, with its bright heaven, its fresh sweet earth, its gladsome, soft, yet strengthening air, its limpid living water. And within as without all was spring-time, the season of million-fold forces gladly and grandly creative, of sunlight now clear and blithesome, and now veiled with clouds that came only to break into fruitful showers. "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee," and Galilee felt and owned the Spirit

and the power. In the homes of its peasantry and the hamlets of its fishermen, on the shores of its beautiful sea, in the towns and villages that stood on its banks and were mirrored in its waves, He preached his Gospel. Only his own Nazareth refused to hear Him. Thither, indeed, He had gone, had entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, as his custom was, and had stood up to read. To Him the place was full of sacred associations. He had there, as boy and youth and man, listened for hours and days, to the voice of God. Memories of visions more glorious than had come to Moses or Isaiah, of meditations that lifted time into eternity and filled man with God, of loved friends passed into silence and rest, of moments when the unseen opened to the eye and the unheard entered the soul, made the place to Him awful yet attractive as the gate of heaven to one who has approached with reverent feet and beheld in the distance the glories that dazzle mortal sight. But others had their associations as well as He, and theirs were not always as sacred as his. The synagogue was often the scene of strife. The conflict of opinion was not unknown there. Rival schools, sects, and teachers have never been slow to express their differences, and in the battle of words the Jew has shewn pre-eminent skill. So the men of Nazareth had their personal rivalries and spites, and when One they knew, so far as the senses can know, rose, read, and applied to Himself the prophetic words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor," they received his gracious speech with incredulous wonder. But when He proceeded to speak with authority, to

rebuke their unbelief, to quote against them their own proverbs, then they "were filled with wrath, rose up and thrust him out of the city." And He went his way, and found elsewhere men who heard gladly his words of power.

The strange thing about the new Teacher was not his having been untaught and a carpenter. The great creative spirits of Israel had never been the sons of a school. They were not made in the academy or the senate; their diploma came straight from Heaven, was the direct gift of the Almighty. Moses, the Lawgiver, was educated amid the sultry slopes of Horeb while tending the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law. David, the typical theocratic king, the maker of the grandest psalms, was taken from the sheepfold, "from following the ewes great with young." When the prophetic schools were worse than dumb, men like the herdsman of Tekoa, or the patient suffering son of Hilki'ah, had become the true speakers for God. A man may be trained to be a scholar or thinker, statesman or mechanic, but not a prophet. That is a divine vocation, and the calling must be of God, cannot be of man. And even when the vocation had ceased to come, and teaching was only professional drill in the letters of a dead past, the great man of the school might still be a son of the workshop or the field. The celebrated masters of the Talmud and the Targums were tradesmen and artisans, weavers, tent-makers, labourers. The rabbi was qualified rather than disqualified for his office by a handicraft. And so it was no strange thing in Israel that one hitherto known as a carpenter should stand forward a pro-

fessed Teacher, a man learned in the law and the prophets.

But the strange thing was the new Teacher Himself. He stood distinguished from all the rabbis who had been, or then were, in Israel. Of the points that made Him pre-eminent and unique three may be here specified.

(1) The relation between his person and his word. The Teacher made the truth He taught. His teaching was his articulated person, his person his incorporated teaching. The divinity the one expressed the other embodied. He came to found a kingdom by manifesting his kingdom, by declaring Himself a King. The King was the centre round which the kingdom crystallized. His first words announced its advent; his last affirmed its reality, though a reality too sublimely ideal to be intelligible to the man of the world who knew enough to ask the question, "What is truth?" but not enough to wait for its answer. And the first word and the last were alike revelations of Himself; the truth He was incarnated, as it were, in speech, that it might live an ideal life on earth, while He lived a real and personal life in heaven.

(2) The consciousness He had of Himself and his truth; its authority and creative energy. He knew that He was true and his word true, was certain that, though He never wrote, only spoke, his words were imperishable—would outlast heaven and earth. He was, at the first as at the last, at the last as at the first, certain of the reality of his words and claims, of their endurance and triumph. He was as calmly and consciously confident when he sat, pitied

by Pilate, in the shadow of Calvary as when He went forth, approved by John, to preach, in his fresh and glorious manhood, "the gospel of the kingdom of God."

(3) His knowledge of his truth and mission was throughout perfect and self-consistent. His first word revealed his purpose, expressed his aim, embodied his grand idea. He did not learn by experience; He knew by Divine intuition what He had come to accomplish. His progress was not a series of tentative efforts, of mended mistakes, but an orderly movement to a consciously conceived end. "Had Christ at first a plan?" is a question which has often been discussed. "Plan" is a word too little ideal and spiritual, too mechanical and pragmatic, to be here appropriate. If we could use Idea in the Platonic sense, as a term denoting the archetypal image or pattern of things in the Divine reason, then I would say, Christ had at the beginning the Idea He meant to realize, knew the end toward which He and his were then and evermore to strive. And the evidence lives in the phrase which was the most frequent on his lips, "The kingdom of heaven." He who has penetrated its meaning knows what Christ came to do; he who has not done so has yet to know the Christ.

What, then, does the phrase "the kingdom of heaven" mean? Can we interpret it through its King? The notions of kinghood are very varied—differ in different nations, or even in the same nations in different ages. In England here the law is above the sovereign; *lex* is *rex*. The Queen is the greatest subject in these realms, has to be loyal to the superior

royalty of the Constitution, our true lord paramount. The Roman Cæsar was an Imperator, the commander of an army become the monarch of many peoples, with his old military supremacy of person and will. Of the Greek kings the earlier were chiefs, leaders of men ; but the later were tyrants, despots who had dared to usurp the inalienable rights of free men. In Israel the kingdom was theocratic ; the king was consecrated by the priest and instructed by the prophet that he might administer the law and ordinances of the God who had given him the throne, and whose will he existed to enforce and obey. But this ideal had seldom been realized, had almost always been depraved ; and the fond imagination of the people, despairing and sick of the oppressive present, had pictured a future in which an ideal king, the anointed of God, should come to reign in righteousness. Yet the good dreamed of was political rather than moral ; exalted the Jew, but cast down the Gentile ; magnified a nation, but did not ennoble man. Though it had been realized, the perfect had not come.

Now these notions of kingdom hardly help us, save by way of contrast, to understand Christ's. Our ordinary ideas and experiences are here the worst possible interpreters. His sovereignty was not the creature, but the creator, of law ; the kingdom did not make the king, but the king the kingdom. His will was not imperial—the transfigured and crowned might of the master of many legions—but moral, the expression of a self-vanquishing and victorious love. His authority did not lessen but enlarged the circle of human rights ; made men awake to claims and quali-

ties in their manhood they had never known before. He did not seek the sanction and seal of the priest, or the counsel and guidance of the prophet ; but assumed his title and instituted his reign at the bidding of what seemed his own unauthorized will. And then He appeared without the attributes and actions, without the character and designs Israel had expected in its ideal king. He had no antipathy to Rome, but was willing to be a dutiful citizen of the Empire. He did not feel that his kingdom either denied or excluded Cæsar ; that tribute either touched or tarnished his supremacy. Men said he was of David's line ; but He never based his royalty on his descent. When they came to make Him a king He fled from their hands. When they asked Him to exercise one of the oldest royal prerogatives and judge a cause, He refused. His whole attitude was a puzzle, a dark enigma, to his contemporaries ; his claim a thing to be ridiculed. The superscription nailed above his cross was meant to be ironical. Pilate thought it mocked the Jews ; the Jews thought it mocked Jesus. But the irony lived in its truth, which was bitter to him who wrote and those who read it, not to Him who bore it above his head.

Christ's great idea, then, is too much his own, has too little of the local and transitory, too much of the universal and eternal, to be interpreted through our notions of kingdom. If it is to be understood at all it must be through his own varied and many-featured presentation. We have to note then, at the outset, that He has two formulæ for his great idea—"The kingdom of heaven," and "The kingdom of God." These are used with a slight difference of meaning,

and each is best understood through its antithesis. "The kingdom of heaven" stands opposed to the kingdoms of earth, the great world-empires that lived and ruled by the strength of their armies. "The kingdom of God" has as its opposite the kingdom of evil, or Satan, the great empire of anarchy and darkness, creative of misery and death to man. By the first antithesis Christ opposed his kingdom to the empires that were in means and ends, in principles and practice, bad. These had grown out of the cruel ambitions, the jealousies, and hatreds of men and States; had created war, with its inevitable offspring, bloodshed, famine, pestilence, the oppression which crushed the weak and the tyranny which exalted the strong. But the kingdom from above was no empire of an overgrown State, no ambitious scheme of a ruthless conqueror, realized by merciless agents and means; but was the descent of a spiritual power, calm and ubiquitous as the sunlight, plastic, penetrative, pervasive as the crystal air, silently changing from ill to good, from chaos to order, both man and his world. By the second antithesis Christ opposed his kingdom to the empire of evil, the dominion of sin in the individual and the race. Out of sin had come ruin to the single soul and the collective society. Evil had made man the enemy of man, the estranged and fearful child of God. But the kingdom of God was good, belonged to Him, came from Him, existed to promote his ends, to vanquish sin, and restore on earth an obedience that would make it happy and harmonious as heaven. So, though the phrases were Hebrew, the ideas were Christian. The old terms were transfigured and made radiant with a meaning

high as heaven, vast as the universe, inexhaustible as eternity.

Were, then, the two phrases to be distinguished as to meaning, it might be thus: the one indicates the nature and character of the new kingdom, the other its source and end. But for the interpretation of the idea it is necessary to understand, not only the names that denote it, but also its more distinctive qualities, aspects, and relations. (1) It is present, an already existing reality, none the less real that it was unseen, undiscovered by the very men who professed to be looking for it.¹ (2) It is expansive, has an extensive and intensive growth, can have its dominion extended and its authority more perfectly recognized and obeyed.² Its real is also its potential being. While it has come, it is yet always coming; the idea exists, but its realization is a continuous process. (3) It does its work silently and unseen; grows without noise, like the seed in the ground, which swells, bursts, and becomes a tree great enough to lodge the birds of the air.³ And its intensive is as silent as its expansive action. It penetrates and transforms the man who enters it. Its entrance into him is his entrance into it, his being born again, his becoming as a little child, the new citizen of a new state.⁴ (4) It creates and requires righteousness in all its subjects. To seek it is to seek the righteousness of God.⁵ Where righteousness is real it is realized. (5) It is the possession and reward of those who have certain spiritual

¹ Luke vi. 20; xvii. 20, 21; Matt. xx. 1.

² Matt. vi. 10; xiii. 3-8; 19-23.

³ Matt. xiii. 31-33.

⁴ Matt. xviii. 1-3; Luke xviii. 17; John iii. 3-5.

⁵ Matt. vi. 33; v. 19, 20.

qualities. "The poor in spirit," the "persecuted for righteousness' sake," the childlike and the simple are its possessors and heirs.¹ (6) It is without local or national character, can have subjects anywhere, has none for simply formal or hereditary reasons.² No man belongs to it simply because a Jew, or is excluded from it simply because a Gentile. (7) It is at once universal and individual, meant to be preached everywhere and to every one;³ to comprehend the race by pervading all its units. And (8) the universal is to be an everlasting kingdom, to endure throughout all generations. Heaven and earth may perish, but it must for evermore endure.

We must now attempt to formulate the idea of the kingdom. It is in nature and character heavenly: comes by the will of God being done on earth as in heaven. It is in origin and aim divine: proceeds from God that it may fulfil God's ends. Its being is real, but its ends are not yet realized, though the realization is in process. The process is silent and spiritual, the creation of righteousness in the individual and the race.

The idea includes, then, as an essential element, the notion of a reign, the reign of God in men, and through men over mankind. As such it must be, on the human side, inner, invisible. The nature of the king determines the character of the kingdom. Where authority is legal it can employ legal processes and forms; where it is ethical and spiritual, it must be enforced through the con-

¹ Matt. v. 3, 10; xviii. 4.

² Matt. viii. 11; xxi. 31; Luke xiii. 29.

³ Matt. xxiv. 14.

science and obeyed by the spirit. An invisible and moral sovereign implies an invisible and moral reign. The unseen is not, indeed, the unknown God. He knows, but does not see, Himself. We can know though we cannot see Him ; the heart can feel his presence, the conscience can confess his authority. And where it does so righteousness is born. Where He is known and obeyed He reigns, his kingdom is realized.

But a second element involved in the idea is, that it is a reign by ideals, by truths believed and loved. The men who enter and live in the kingdom know God, believe the truths personalized in his Son. And so, with its sphere in the spirit and the truth as its instrument of authority and expansion, it is in its proper nature ideal. It is neither an institution, nor capable of being embodied in one. It cannot be identified with the church. The two are radically dissimilar. *Εκκλησία* does, *Βασιλεία* does not, denote an institution or structure. The kingdom is "righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost," but the church is a community, a body, a building. There may be many churches ; there is only one kingdom. The voluntary action of men can institute the former, but not the latter. The kingdom created the church, not the church the kingdom. The parables that explain and illustrate the one are inapplicable to the other. The *Βασιλεία* was the most, the *Εκκλησία* the least, familiar idea of Christ. Of the first He never ceases to speak ; of the second He speaks only twice ;¹ and each time so as to indicate its structural or institutional character.

¹ Matt. xvi. 18 ; xviii. 17.

The church and the kingdom may thus be more properly contrasted than compared. Only two points of contrast can be here noticed.

1. The church¹ has, the kingdom has not, a formal or organized being. The one must be a more or less elaborate organism, the other can only live a spiritual and unembodied life. A polity is as necessary to the voluntary society we call a church as to the involuntary society we call a nation. The ideals of church polity, realized or realizable, are many; but each has had, or may have, its counterpart in the State. There are, indeed, in each case but two great political types, though each may branch into very dissimilar forms. A State may be either monarchical or republican. If monarchical, it may be either autocratic or limited, imperial or constitutional. If republican, it may be either aristocratic or democratic—either a republic proper, where the authority is vested in representatives elected by the people; or a democracy proper, where the supreme authority is the people in council assembled. And the church, like the State, may be either a monarchy or a republic. If the monarchy be autocratic, it is, in ecclesiastical phraseology, a Papacy; if limited, an Episcopacy. If the republic be a representative aristocracy, it is Presbyterian; if democratic, Congregational. And so, while a polity is necessary to the church, it is not a polity of a particular type. The church creates the polity, not the polity the church. It has existed,

¹ The term "church" has indeed both a universal and specific reference. But the idea in both cases is the same. It always denotes an organized society. There are obvious advantages connected with the use of the term in a generalized sense. It enables us to deal with the general notion.

can exist, under each specific form, just as France has been Legitimist, Orleanist, Imperialist, and Republican, and remained France still. Men may argue that the one polity is more, the others are less, perfect; but no man has any right to argue that any one is essential to the being of the Christian church.

While, however, we can so describe and classify the polities of the church, we cannot attribute one to the kingdom. It is without a polity, properly so called. A *πολιτεία* implies both a *πόλις* and *πολίται*, but a *βασιλεία* simply a *βασιλεύς*. The king creates the kingdom, but the citizens the State and its polity. And the king here is the eternal and invisible God, who seeks to establish on earth the reign of heaven.

2. Men can make and administer laws in the church, but not in the kingdom. The very name of the former implies its power to determine its own constitution, the terms of communion or citizenship, the rights and privileges it will grant to its members, the duties and services it will require from them. And this power the church has always exercised, often with a most rigorous will. It has formulated creeds, declaring one opinion orthodox, another heretical. It has framed laws and executed judgment on every bold transgressor. Its judgments have been now righteous, now unrighteous, often pronounced against the evil, almost as often against the good. But in the kingdom of God the authority is God's, not man's; its laws are divine, administered from heaven though obeyed on earth. Exclusion from the church need not be exclusion from the kingdom. The excluded and excluding may be both within it. The man who

seeks or loves God's righteousness lives within God's kingdom, even though the excommunicated or the unknown of the churches. The real is not always a conscious Christian. Men come from the east and west and sit down with Abraham in the kingdom of God. It has room enough for Anselm and Abelard, Pole and Parker, Milton and Rutherford, Baxter and Laud, Bunyan and Ken. Rival churchmen are not rivals in the divine kingdom. Where man ceases to make and administer laws he must cease to anathematize his brother, and humbly begin to speak the praise of the God whose grace he enjoys, whose reign he confesses. There he lives like a little child, meekly learning to be the obedient vassal of the Eternal King.

But while the church and the kingdom thus differ, they are most intimately related. The relation is twofold. (1) The kingdom creates the church, but (2) the church exists for the sake of the kingdom. The ideals, the divine and redemptive truths, which actualize the reign of God, create the men and purposes constitutive of the church. It could hardly be said to exist in Christ's day. While He speaks of the kingdom as present and real, He speaks of the church as something still future; not as building, but as to be built.¹ It begins to exist, after his ascension, with the first Christian community. Persons were necessary to its existence. It was a society, an association, of the like-minded. But minds are made alike by being persuaded to think alike, and the persuasion came of the truths that were embodied in Christ. He was the truth, the ideal, that made the

¹ Matt. xvi. 18: "Upon this rock I will build my church."

kingdom impersonated. His very being created it ; but the effective action of his truth was needed to create the church.

And the created was meant to serve the Creator ; the church was to promote the ends, to realize the ideals, of the kingdom. If the βασιλεία was steeped in Hebrew, the ἐκκλησία was penetrated with Greek, associations. Its sense is not to be etymologically explained ; its use was too specific and well-defined to admit of that. The ἐκκλησία was the assembly of the citizens—the citizens assembled to ordain or administer laws, to transact the business, maintain the being or secure the well-being of the State. And so the church exists for the kingdom—is, as it were, the society of the enfranchised organized to further the national weal. Within the one empire there may be many πόλεις, and each may have its own πολιτεία, at once determined and exercised by its own ἐκκλησία ; but the cities, however variously constituted, are alike members of the State, united in a common devotion to imperial interests, often best promoting these by honourable attention to their own. So the great βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ is one, but its πόλεις, with their respective ἐκκλησιαί, are many. Yet the multitude does not exclude unity ; cannot so long as loyalty to the kingdom and its ends is common to all. And without this loyalty the church loses its right to be. It is not in itself an end, but a means, and lives as it fulfils its purpose. Its purpose is to magnify its Creator, enlarge the kingdom, promote its extensive and intensive growth. Christ lives in the church, in and by it reigns that He may put all his enemies under his feet, and bring the time when the kingdom

shall be delivered up to God, even the Father, that He may be all in all.

We have only space for a word on the Ideals of the kingdom, its great creative truths. These may be reduced to two: the paternity of God and the sonship of man. God is manlike; man is Godlike. The first gives us, on the Divine side, the grace that can stoop to incarnation and sacrifice; the second gives us, on the human side, the nature that makes restoration both possible and desirable. And these were embodied in Christ. He was the manifested paternity of God; the realized sonship of man. In Him the highest truths as to God and man were personalized, made real and active, living and creative for earth. His very being made the kingdom; to be was for Him to be both the Truth and a King. And so, while He was king, the kingdom was God's; the reign of God through and by the Truth Christ both made and was.

The kingdom, then, Christ instituted, was sublime and glorious enough. While it has only an ideal being, or being in the realm of the spirit, it is creative of the best and noblest realities on earth. It has made our Churches, and inspired these to do every good work they have accomplished. It is the spring, too, of our philanthropies, our ambitions to be and to do good. While it can be embodied in no institution it forms and animates every institution that promotes the common weal. The State feels it in all its higher legislation, aims, and endeavours. Art in all its branches pulses with an enthusiasm it creates, is charmed by visions it sends, and fascinated by ideals it raises, making our perfect seem imperfect still.

It is, too, the one power creative of righteousness. It seeks the good of the race by seeking the good of all its individuals; blesses the mass through the units that compose it. The rewards of the kingdom are the virtues of the kingdom, the holiness that is happiness, the graces that adorn the saints of God. And it does its glorious work without ceasing, making earth more like heaven, man more like God. While it lives He reigns, and while He reigns man need fear no victory of evil, either over himself or his kind; may rest assured that the Divine Father who guides the world, will guide it, through its shadow as through its sunshine, to the calm and glory of an eternal day.

A. M. FAIRBAIRN.

ON THE EPISTLES OF ST. PETER.

THE SECOND EPISTLE. (*Concluded.*)

To resume. The quotations in the second Chapter, which wear the appearance of being a Greek rendering of some Hebrew original, are full of words which not even St. Jude, though drawing from the same source, has employed. Such are *ταρταρόω* (Chap. ii. 4), rendered to *cast down into hell*, but which is derived from one of the Greek equivalents for the Hebrew word *Sheol*, and is, literally, *to commit to Tartarus*. In the same verse we have the word *σειρά*, which is translated *chain*, a word used by no one else in the New Testament, and the figurative employment of it here, in the expression "chains of darkness," is just in the manner of St. Peter's word-painting. *Πλαστός*, too, in the preceding verse, which is rendered *feigned*, is likewise confined in

its New Testament use to this Second Epistle, and indicates that readiness to bend themselves to any circumstances, that *plastic* nature, which must ever be the characteristic of words which are meant only to deceive. Here is another touch of St. Peter's style, whose graphic mind would readily picture words of this unstable nature, as clay under the hand of the potter, which can be moulded now to one shape and now to another, according as it suits the purpose of the workman. And in the same passage *ἐμπορεύομαι*, "*to make merchandise of*," is a word that is only found once again, in the Epistle of St. James (Chap. iv. 13), and there in the ordinary sense of "buying and selling," and not as here with the implied additional sense of knavery and dishonesty. In the same verse (Chap. ii. 3) *ἀργέω* is likewise unique and somewhat graphic. "Whose judgment lingereth not" is the English rendering; but *ἀργέω* means *to be idle*, which seems to convey some stronger sense. Their judgment is doing its work even though they may not see it, though it may be somewhat tardy in its effect, yet it is quite sure, it has always been in steady accumulation, and will fall with the greater force in the end.

Not content with any of the ordinary words for *burning*, which are plentiful enough, the writer, when speaking of Sodom and Gomorrah employs again (Chap. ii. 6) a picturesque and unique word. *Τεφρώω* is *to turn into ashes*, and paints most vividly in a single word the condition to which the valley of the Cities of the Plain was reduced by their overthrow. So of *μῶμοι*, *blemishes*, and *ἐντροφάω*, *to sport themselves*, in Chap. ii. 13, both which words are

found only here. The former primarily signifies *blame*, and by the Greek classical writers is sometimes personified as Momus, the very genius of fault-finding. The writer of our Epistle uses it for those grounds on which one may find fault with anything, and this our translators gave very well by *blemishes* ; but a glance at the history of the word is sufficient to shew that it is one which no tame describer would have employed, but is graphic in a high degree. The other word ἐντυφάω is weakly rendered by *sporting themselves*. The noun with which it is connected is rendered *riot*, a few words earlier in this same verse, and *living in riot* is the sort of translation which we ought to have here, that the notion of unrestrained self-indulgence, which the writer depicted and the context demands, might be fully brought out. In the next verse (Chap. ii. 14), ἀκατάπαυστος, used of “eyes which never cease from sin,” is unique, though closely resembling, as we have seen, 1 Pet. iv. 1,—“He that hath suffered in the flesh *hath ceased from sin*.”

Once more, in Chap. ii. 16, we find three words which occur in this Second Epistle only—the words for *rebuke*, ἐλεγξίς ; *iniquity*, παρανομία ; and *madness*, παραφρονία ; while we seem to have in the last verse (22) of the Chapter a curious independence of translation which deserves a longer notice, as well on this account as for the words of which it consists. We know from the New Testament that the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament scriptures was in constant use in the days of the apostles, and that both our Lord and his apostles quote from it sometimes exactly, sometimes with

slight variations. But in the verse under our consideration, the writer has varied from this rule. He seems to be quoting Prov. xxvi. 11, but he gives Greek words entirely different from those of the LXX. If the suggestion which we have already made, that throughout the whole of this second Chapter the writer is translating from some Aramaic original, be adopted, we can understand how, in thought, he would turn more readily to the Hebrew original than to the Version, and how he would thus be likely to give us an independent rendering of the Hebrew. There may also be another reason why he modified his translation. With a Jew's love for parallelism he has added another proverb to balance the one which he seems to quote. The verse in Proverbs runs thus, "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly." Now the whole passage in 2 Pet. ii. 20-22 is speaking of the fool returning to his folly. The writer, therefore, needed only the former half of the verse for his illustration, which he takes, but gives it in a translation entirely his own, and not quoted from the LXX., and then adds, as a parallel, "And the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." But whether we admit the first clause of the verse to be an independent translation which the writer made from the original Hebrew, or consider that both expressions were common proverbs, we have yet the singular feature in the verse that *ἐξέραμα*, vomit; *κύλισμα*, wallowing; and *βόρβορος*, mire, are words found in no other portion of the New Testament.

In the third Chapter of the Epistle we no longer find what we have called the influence of translation upon the writer's language, but come to his own independent utterances. And here we trace the same kind of peculiar and pictorial expressions which we have so often noticed in the words of St. Peter. First we have *ροῖζγδὸν* (Chap. iii. 10), a word found only here in the Sacred Volume, and rendered, *with a great noise*, in describing the final conflagration of the heavens. But in the original word is contained a clear intimation of the character of the noise, which the English version loses altogether. It is the hurtling sound of weapons whizzing through the sky, or the rushing tumult of a mighty torrent. Then, in the same verse, *καυσώω*, represented by *with fervent heat*, fails of the picturesque character of its unique original. The verb is not the usual one employed to signify *consuming by fire*; indeed the writer employs two others, of more common use in that sense, in the immediate context. This word is connected with the noun *καύσων*, the *burning heat* of James i. 11, and when joined, as here, with *λυθήσονται*, expresses that dissolution which shall take place in the universal frame when the fire of the last day shall blaze down upon it, and, as it were, melt it and cause it to fall asunder. And this dissolution is expressed afterwards (Chap. iii. 13) by another verb, *τήκομαι*, which, literally, signifies *to melt away*, the very effect of such burning heat as is implied in the verb *καυσώω* and its noun *καύσων*. Going on for a verse or two we come to the verb *στρεβλῶνσι*

(Chap. iii. 16), used of those who *wrest* the Scriptures. But the original word points to an act of the greatest violence, an act of wilful torturing. Its root is a word which is used for the rack on which criminals in ancient times were stretched, to force from them a confession which could be procured in no other way; and which, when procured, though it answered for a time the purposes of those who sought it, was more frequently false than true. Carry this notion with us to the interpretation of the verb *wrest*, and how much more meaning does it infuse into the passage! These men will make the Scriptures speak their language, whether the plainest sense thereof be so or not; and therefore they are represented in the picturesque phrase of our writer as putting the very words on the rack to wring out of them a meaning which cannot by fair means be obtained.

Long as we have dwelt on the pictorial language of the Epistle, we have not yet exhausted either the pictorial words or the unique expressions of the writer. We have said nothing of such words as *μυωπάζων* (Chap. i. 9), "that cannot see afar off," where the idea contained in the root of the verb implies the *wilful blocking up* of the apertures of sight. We have not dwelt on the pictorial and Petrine character of the use of *σκήνωμα* (Chap. i. 13, 14), "a tabernacle," as a name for the body, of which the soul is but the temporary tenant; nor on *δυσνόητα* (Chap. iii. 16), "hard to be understood," of the Pauline writings; nor on *νυστάζειν* (Chap. ii. 3), in which is conveyed the notion of that

sleepy nodding of a person overwrought and weary, yet feeling bound to go on, which is missed from our English rendering, "slumbereth not;" nor on the forcible and unique *κατακλυσθεῖς*, which is tamely rendered (Chap. iii. 6) by "overflowed;" for the word contains the same root as that other which is always used for the greatest of overflows (*κατακλυσμός*), the universal deluge.¹ Yet enough, I think, has been said to shew that the writer of this Epistle had precisely the same tendencies in his language, and the same peculiarities in his choice of words, as was possessed so eminently by St. Peter, and these tendencies and peculiarities of no ordinary character, but such as make St. Peter's utterances remarkable among the writings of the New Testament.

But to continue. We noticed in the First Epistle that the Apostle was fond of a duplication of terms and delighted in a wealth of epithets. In the Second Epistle we are met by precisely the same partiality. Take, as examples, "*the exceeding great and precious*

¹ To complete our list of peculiar words we have to add,—

<i>ἄθεσμος</i> (Chap. ii. 7 ; iii. 17),	<i>μεγαλοπρεπής</i> (Chap. i. 17),
<i>ἰλωσις</i> (Chap. ii. 12),	<i>μίασμα</i> (Chap. ii. 20),
<i>βλέμμα</i> (Chap. ii. 18),	<i>μασμός</i> (Chap. ii. 10),
<i>βραδυνής</i> (Chap. iii. 9),	<i>ὀμίχλη</i> (Chap. ii. 17),
<i>ἐκάστοτε</i> (Chap. i. 15),	<i>παρεισάγειν</i> (Chap. ii. 1),
<i>ἐκπαλαι</i> (Chap. ii. 3 ; iii. 5),	<i>ταχινός</i> (Chap. i. 14 ; ii. 1),
<i>ἐπόπτης</i> (Chap. i. 16),	<i>ψευδοδιδάσκαλος</i> (Chap. ii. 1).

Many of these, which occur in Chap. ii., we believe to be due to the fact that St. Peter was translating, perhaps from memory, from some Aramaic record, from which he, as well as St. Jude, drew those illustrations which are so much alike in the two Epistles, and yet have so many differences. But some of the words quoted just now, as *βραδυνής*, *ἐπόπτης*, and others, partake strongly of those Petrine characteristics which have been so largely illustrated in the text.

promises" (Chap. i. 4); "Ye shall be *neither barren nor unfruitful*" (Chap. i. 8); "he is *blind, and cannot see afar off*" (Chap. i. 9); "till the *day dawn* and the *day star arise* in your hearts" (Chap. i. 19); "whose *judgment lingereth not*, and their *damnation slumbereth not*" (Chap. ii. 3); "*presumptuous* are they and *self-willed*" (Chap. ii. 10); "*spots* are they and *blemishes*" (Chap. ii. 13); "*kept in store, reserved unto fire*" (Chap. iii. 7); "*without spot* and *blemiless*" (Chap. iii. 14); "*unlearned* and *unstable*" (Chap. iii. 16). Here is a very trifling peculiarity of style, but one which was sure to betray itself in the man who possessed it, though it is of so insignificant an order that no imitator would be likely to hit upon it. The very slightness of its nature, while it is in perfect accord with St. Peter's manner of speech and writing, tells more strongly than a more noticeable mark in favour of the apostolic origin of the Letter in which it so characteristically occurs.

But it is when we come to remark the traces of that peculiar turn of mind which led St. Peter to be ever looking back on his past life, and giving hints of such retrospection in his words, that we especially find evidence of his authorship in the later Letter. Such a backward view of another's life is impossible to an imitator. He may study carefully and copy very closely the objective external marks of the author whom he has taken for his model; but to enter into another man's mind, to look back with the vision of another over a life of which he has had no experience, to grasp within his mental glance scenes different from those which have been made

the subjects of allusion in the known writings of him whom he is aiming to copy, and to let the effect of such a review be traceable only by subtle evidences in his words,—this is work beyond the imitator. To achieve this he must assume the other's personality, with all its past experiences. He must become his very self.

We have already pointed out an instance in the Epistle where the mind of the writer seems certainly to have been dwelling on the outpouring of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and where his thoughts have made themselves apparent in the words which he has written. We have noticed, too, Dean Alford's remarks on such retrospective allusions in the language of Chap. i. 13, 15, where *σκήνωμα* and *ἐξοδος* are found, two words which occur in a marked manner in the Transfiguration narrative, and which an allusion to that scene brought to the writer's thoughts and into the immediate context in the Epistle. But the whole of this latter passage is full of allusions to that scene of Peter's reconciliation described by St. John (Chap. xxi. 15–19). There Peter is told by Jesus that, when old age shall have come upon him, he will have to depart from this world, and not by a natural death. "When thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake he," St. John adds, "signifying by what death he should glorify God." To this intimation the memory of the writer of our Epistle is carried back, and he reminds his readers that Christ had already forewarned him of his end,

and tells them that he is now ready to obey his Lord's command (John xxi.22), "Follow thou me," even when such following should be to a death of the same dreadful kind which his Master endured. And as if his mind were full of this following in the very *manner* of Christ's death, he uses of his own departure the precise word *ἐξόδος*, which had been employed in the Transfiguration story concerning Christ's "*decease*" (Luke ix. 31), "which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." As if he would intimate by his choice of words, "I know that as my Lord died, in such wise shall I also die."

It may also be remarked here, as an evidence that the notice of the Transfiguration given in this Epistle is not the work of an imitator, that the words which are quoted as spoken by the heavenly voice are not the same with the language of any of the Gospel narratives. We may be quite certain that a writer who was merely a pretender would have been very careful that here at least he should be in accord with the earlier historic narrative. But the writer of this Epistle was undisturbed by any idea that his testimony would be impugned, and so he has given in substance what is reported by the Evangelists, but has left verbal identity altogether out of his consideration.

It is a small matter, but one which bespeaks the fisherman who in early days had plied his trade on the Galilean lake, that *δεδεάζω*, *to catch with a bait*, is his favourite word for the snares by which men are allured into evil. Thus (Chap. ii. 14) he speaks of "*beguiling* [literally, laying a bait for] unstable

souls," and (Chap. ii. 18) "they *allure* [set a bait] through the lusts of the flesh." And the word is used nowhere else but by St. James (Chap. i. 14), "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and *enticed*."

We can see how the memory of the writer goes back to the exhortations of Jesus when He is speaking of the "false teachers" who shall be among his flock, "who shall privily bring in damnable heresies, . . . and many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." That solemn address, uttered just before the Lord's decease, was vividly present to the writer's mind, and its character, so appropriate to his own circumstances, stamped itself upon his words. "Many false prophets," the Lord had foretold (Matt. xxiv. 11), "shall rise and shall deceive many, and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Peter had once beheld this waxing cold of love, and the way of truth evil spoken of, when, in his Master's life, many had turned back (John vi. 66) and walked no more with Him, because his words did not harmonize with other teachings to which they had given more earnest heed. And now there are like signs of the times: now men deny the Lord that bought them, and almost in Christ's words does the writer warn his hearers of their peril. In the same way does he go back in mind to the words of Jesus when he says (Chap. ii. 20) of those who have once escaped the pollutions of the world, but are again entangled therein, "the latter end is worse with them than the

beginning." Jesus, after uttering almost the very words, had said (Matt. xii. 45), "Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation," and the memory of the disciple brings back the words of which his own eyes were in some sort beholding the fulfilment.

Once more does that last sermon of Jesus (Matt. xxiv. xxv.), spoken when He had gone out and departed from the Temple, never more to return thither, seem to be ruling the writer's thoughts, as in the third Chapter of the Epistle he tells how, "in the last days, there shall come scoffers walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" And the Master's solemn tones in the same discourse when He says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven," find their echo in the exhortation (Chap. iii. 10) of the apostle, which also looks back to his own Pentecostal sermon, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

But there is one allusion to a scene in the past life of the apostle St. Peter which is very marked, and most appropriately finds place in this Second Epistle. The writer is not, as in his first Letter, giving practical precepts for the regulation of the Christian life, but warnings against dangers which will beset the flock from errors in teaching and

consequent loss of faith. This duty had been especially laid upon Peter, and in most memorable words. After a solemn rebuke (Luke xxii. 33), wherein the wiles of Satan against Peter himself had been foretold, the Lord had said unto him, "When thou art converted, strengthen [στήριζον] thy brethren." Now had the time arrived when such strengthening was required, when the Christian body would need prayers as earnest as the Lord's for his apostle that their "faith might not fail." And the occasion brings the word which Christ had used into the language of this Epistle. The writer speaks as one who knew that this work had been appointed to him, and that he had laboured to fulfil his charge. "I will not be negligent," he says (Chap. i. 12), "to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them and be *established* [ἐσθηρυγμένους] in the present truth." Again, those who wrest the Scriptures to force them to bear such a meaning as they desire are (Chap. iii. 16) "the unlearned and *unstable*" (ἀσθηρικοι), while the condition to which the apostle by his teaching has led his followers he speaks of again (Chap. iii. 17) in an expression which recalls the earnest injunction of Jesus, "Beware, lest ye . . . fall from your own *steadfastness*" (σθηρυγμόν). Our English Version, by its variations of expression, conceals from the reader the frequent repetition in the Original of this same notion ; but, when observed, it is a repetition which partakes largely of the retrospective character of much of St. Peter's diction, and is exactly like what we have seen more than once in the larger compass of the First Epistle.

Let us now look back on all these resemblances which we have been noticing. There is much in the words of the Second Epistle which resembles the First, more even than those who assign the two Letters to different authors have pointed out. Such similarity might naturally be expected if St. Peter were the author of the Epistle, but it might have been achieved by another than he. Yet the writer has not only exhibited points of resemblance to the First Epistle, but also to the Gospel of St. Mark, and to those portions of the Acts of the Apostles which cannot but at first have proceeded out of the mouth of St. Peter. That St. Peter's language throughout all the compositions which had their origin from him would have a marked likeness is not difficult to understand, but it is hard to believe that a writer whose object was mere imitation would have ventured in an Epistle to copy the phraseology of the historical books. If he made one Letter bear a close resemblance to the other, his purpose would have seemed abundantly answered. But let us grant that there existed a writer so clever at the date when it is suggested that this Second Epistle was composed, and that he had in his possession and had studied, with a view to his forgery, the diction of St. Peter in every part of the New Testament where traces of that diction are to be found. Yet we have to go farther than this. We have to believe that the supposed imitator had a deep insight into St. Peter's modes of thought, and so managed to give to his Epistle the same eminently practical character which marks all the other utterances of that apostle.

We have to believe that this writer had observed how frequently St. Peter appeals to what was learnt, or to be learnt, by sight, and regarded that faculty as the most efficient mode of influencing men's actions, and that he framed his Letter to be of a like character. We have further to believe that he made allowance for the supposed advanced age of the apostle, as represented in the Second Epistle, and made him appeal not only to sight, but to the old man's faculty, the recollection of bygone times. We have to believe that this fancied forger noticed St. Peter's use of unique and rare words, and had adopted that usage ; yet, while studing his Letter with words of that character, he does not repeat those which had been employed in the First Epistle, though to adopt a fair share of these would have seemed to most men the likeliest way of establishing the claim of his Letter to be a work of St. Peter. We have, moreover, to believe that in the choice of his rare words the imitator was able to do as St. Peter had done, and to choose those which were in general of a most picturesque character, and many of which form in themselves complete word-pictures. We must believe, too, that he could put himself in the position of St. Peter and imitate that apostle in his habit of retrospection, and in so doing make not a retrospect suitable to the circumstances under which he himself had lived, but exactly such a one as St. Peter would have made ; that the allusions in these backward glances shall all be made in St. Peter's character, as though the writer thought *his* thoughts, remembered with *his* memory, and saw

with *his* eyes ; that events like the Transfiguration, Christ's discourse on leaving the Temple at Jerusalem, and that solemn interview in which the repentant apostle was assured of his Lord's forgiveness, shall all be made to leave a natural impress on the language of the Epistle, though without much direct mention of the events, and in some cases no mention whatever. If St. Peter wrote the Second Epistle, all these peculiarities are natural, and are just those which we have observed in the First Epistle ; while to ask us to believe that the composition in which all these resemblances to St. Peter's natural style are found is but the work of a cunning inventor, is to make a far greater demand on our faith than is required to surmount such objections as have been raised against the genuineness of the Epistle.

For deeming it most probable, as we do, that both St. Jude and St. Peter drew the examples which they have given for illustration from some common Aramaic original, we do not feel that the similarity which exists between these two Letters should interfere with the acceptance of our Epistle as the genuine production of the apostle whose name it bears. That it should have been doubted of for some time may be very well understood, if it were first circulated, as was likely, among a portion of the Diaspora, and by them kept as a peculiar and precious treasure of their own. But that it should at length have been accepted and admitted into the Canon proves that those who lived much nearer to the time of its composition than we do, and who, no doubt, had before them evidence of

which we have no trace, were so satisfied of the genuineness of the Letter that their misgivings were swept away.

It ought not, moreover, to surprise us that there is a difference of tone discernible in the language of the two Epistles. The object of the First, written evidently in times when no erroneous teaching gave the overseers of the Church cause for alarm, is to encourage, to exhort, and to advise in matters of piety and duty; and in it the enemy against whom most warning is given is their cruel adversary the Devil. While the Second, put forth in dangerous days, when heresy was rearing its head, speaks all of false teachers, who were ready to lead men astray by their lessons and by scoffing questions to break down the strength of faith. When the objects of the Epistles are so distinct, and the condition of the hearers so different, can we wonder that the teaching deemed needful by the apostle should assume a different shade? To the first auditory Christ's second coming might justly be spoken of as an *ἀποκάλυψις*, a *revelation*. They are styled by the apostle (1 Pet. i. 5), "those who are being kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." To disciples of whom he could thus speak, the appearing of the Lord Jesus would be the heralding of their own entry into the blessed enjoyment of "praise, honour, and glory" through Him. They might, therefore, be expected to welcome all that spake of the coming of the Lord, and to be ready to cry with the writer of the *Ἀποκάλυψις* (Rev. xxii. 20), "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

But when false teachers are abroad, and the apostle feels that "many will follow their pernicious ways," it is a time for the same coming of the Lord to be set before men in its more warning aspect. To those who fall away it will be a *παρουσία*, a coming, a presence (2 Pet. i. 16), but one to which they have not looked forward, nor expected it as a day of enlightenment. To them it will really be the great and terrible "day of the Lord" (Chap. iii. 10), and the "day of judgment" (Chap. iii. 7). Would it not have been strange if Epistles written under such changed circumstances had not borne traces of that change in the character of their arguments and exhortations? And is it not likewise easy to be understood why in the second Letter Jesus is so often styled "the Saviour"? It was against his honour and power that "the damnable heresies" should be introduced, and should make men "deny the Lord that *bought* them." This purchase of mankind by his death constituted him *σωτήρ*, a Saviour, and when there is a danger of the efficacy of that death being questioned, and so of the salvation purchased thereby being imperilled, the circumstances call for that great emphasis which the writer gives to Christ's work of redemption by the name which he delights to apply to the Lord.

Again, our Lord's sufferings are much dwelt on in the First Epistle,—hardly at all in the Second. But is there not a cause? What use is made of Christ's example in this frequent mention? It is to urge Christians to exhibit under their sufferings a patience

like unto his. "As Christ suffered for us, . . . ye should follow his steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21); "It is better that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing, for Christ also hath once suffered, . . . the Just for the unjust" (Chap. iii. 17, 18); "As Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind" (Chap. iv. 1.). This is the tone of the First Epistle. But in days when apostasy is threatening, exhortations of such a kind would be out of place. It would be speaking to deaf ears to urge on an audience who were in peril of a temptation to deny Christ altogether that they should imitate the life of a Master whose lessons even they maysoon be instigated to cast entirely to the winds. In this point too, it is the different circumstances of the time which make different language necessary.

And is the writer of the Second Epistle very anxious, as is said, to make men believe, by his repeated mention of the fact, that he is really the apostle St. Peter, and thus to gain more authority for his composition? He dwells on his personal experience it is true, and perhaps writes himself *Συμεών* (using the Hebrew form rather than the Hellenistic Simon), Symeon, in the first verse of his Epistle, that by his first word he may testify that it is a Hebrew who is speaking to his brethren; just as there is so much in the whole of this Epistle which exhibits that Jewish leaning once so faultily indulged in by St. Peter, and which in its innocent attachment to his own race was likely to grow stronger with increasing age. But observe why in each case the writer puts forward his personal evidence. It is

where that alone would entitle him to speak more strongly than other people. "We have not followed," he says, "cunningly devised fables, . . . but were eye-witnesses of Christ's majesty" (2 Pet. i. 16). Yet here is no striving to exalt the authority of his words, for a moment afterwards he calls prophecy a *more sure* word than his own testimony. Is there here anything of the self-asserting tone of one who pretends to be what he is not? And in like manner, when he speaks (Chap. iii. 2) of those words of which his hearers should be mindful, he places first those "spoken by the holy prophets," and after that adds, "and the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord."

And with regard to another objection. If we place the date of this Second Epistle only at a distance of thirty years after our Lord's death, ought we to feel any surprise that the places associated with his presence on earth have begun to be regarded as sacred by his followers? And, above all, that the mount on which the three apostles had at the Transfiguration a prevision of the glory of heaven, "where Moses and Elias appeared in glory" (Luke ix. 31), should have grown to be by that time reverently spoken of as "the holy mount"?

Let us next look at the words (Chap. iii. 14-16) in which this writer speaks of St. Paul's Epistles. "Wherefore, beloved" he says, "seeing that ye look for *these things* [*τὰυτα*], give diligence that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also,

according to the wisdom given unto him, wrote unto you [ὑμῖν], as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these things [τούτων], wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures [τὰς λοιπὰς γραφὰς], unto their own destruction." Here there can hardly be a question that the τούτων (Chap. v. 16), *these things*, refers back to the ταῦτα, *these things*, of verse 14. It is not at all necessary, therefore, to understand the writer as saying that St. Paul speaks in all his Epistles of "the longsuffering of our Lord as salvation." That apostle (Rom. ii. 4) says, "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance," and it is probable that to those words is the allusion in our Epistle. But *these things* may be extended to all the matter of verses 12 and 13, in which are mentioned the coming of the day of God, the dissolution of the heavens, and the destruction of the world by fire, as well as the expectation of new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness shall dwell. And of these, or some of these subjects, no Epistle of St. Paul can be said to be silent. And when the writer speaks of the Epistles of St. Paul as "written to you," he is evidently including all the Christian Jews, who were his own special care, among the general body of the universal Church. St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, the Ephesians, the Colossians, and Philemon, we can have no doubt were circulated among the very Churches to which St. Peter addresses himself in his First Epistle. And nearly all the Epistles of St. Paul were written before the date, which must be given to the Second Epistle of St.

Peter, and during his residence in Rome we may justly assume that most of these, if not all, had become known to St. Peter. But it is urged that the application of the term *γραφαί* to the Epistles of St. Paul betrays a late date; that in the New Testament times this word was only used of the scriptures of the Old Testament. In the first place, this statement is not correct. For in James iv. 5 we read, "Do ye think that the scripture [*ἡ γραφή*], saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?" of a passage which is nowhere to be found in the Old Testament. And as Bretschneider¹ has pointed out, the Jews of this age spake of other works than the Old Testament as *γραφαί*, as he instances in the case of the Book of Enoch. But if it were not so, can we have a doubt that the writings of the New Testament were certain very speedily to be spoken of, by Christian writers at least, in the very same terms which were used of the records of the older covenant? When we find St. Paul writing, as he does even as early as 1 Thess. ii. 13, of his own Epistles or preaching as "the *word of God* which ye heard of us;" and again (2 Thess. ii. 15) "Hold fast the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle;" we can hardly be surprised that the books which by the thirtieth year after our Lord's death had become current, and some of them no doubt gathered into one collection, should be looked upon with the same reverence and spoken of by the same name which was given to the other and earlier *Word of God*.

¹ Lex. in Nov. Test. s. γ'. *γραφῆ*.

Such are the most forcible of the objections which have been urged against the genuineness of our Epistle. If these be overcome, all else are of very minor character. And when we see that, although written under such widely different circumstances, there is in the two Letters so much accord in thought as is shewn when we compare 1 Pet. ii. 16 ("As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of Christ") with 2 Pet. ii. 19 ("While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption"), passages which breathe the same sentiment though differently expressed; when we trace the similarity of thought in the one Letter, which speaks (1 Pet. ii. 8) of "those which stumble at the word, being disobedient, where unto also they were appointed" (ἐρέθησαν), and in the other, which tells (2 Pet. ii. 6) of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah which God *appointed*¹ (τεθεικώς) "an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;" when we see that both use the same language about the near approach of the end of the world, both speaking of the times immediately approaching as "the last time" (1 Pet. i. 5) or "the last days" (2 Pet. iii. 3); and while one declares "the end of all things is at hand" (1 Pet. iv. 7), the other, in equally solemn tones, while urging his hearers to be "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of the Lord," testifies (2 Pet. iii. 10) that this "day of the Lord shall so come as a thief in the night;" when both Letters speak in like terms of the value of prophecy, the writer of the Second Epistle calling it *more sure*

¹ Authorized Version, "made."

than the testimony of himself and his fellow apostles ; while St. Peter (Chap. i. 10) speaks of the spirit within the prophets of old as " the spirit of Christ " himself ; and when both, in most remarkable language, testify that prophecy did not carry its own interpretation with it ; that, as is said (2 Pet. i. 20), " it is not of any private interpretation," which, as we have shewn above, signifies that the prophet was not the expounder of his own prophecies, and in 1 Pet. i. 12, " Unto whom [the prophets] it was revealed that not unto themselves, but unto us, did they minister the things which are now reported unto you ; " and when to these similarities of thought on most important subjects we add the closeness of resemblance in language and style which it has been the chief aim of this paper to illustrate, there seems to be a large preponderance of evidence in favour of the genuineness of the Second Epistle. If both Epistles be the work of St. Peter, the resemblances are natural, the differences not unnatural, while the hypothesis of a second-century imitator is beset with difficulties which seem beyond all power of solution.

J. RAWSON LUMBY.

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY.

JER. XVIII. 1-10 ; ROM. IX. 19-24.

ST. PAUL's words in dealing with this parable, " Hath not the potter power over the clay ? " have often, I imagine, been read and pondered over with the sense of an intolerable burden. They have seemed to shut out hope and energy and courage. We have found it hard to reconcile them with our sense of human freedom and responsibility. Instead of the glad tidings which tell us that all

men have a Father in heaven, who does not will that any should perish, and hath no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, we seem to hear in them only the proclamation of the absolute sovereignty of the Almighty King. For the gracious and benign aspect of the mind and will of God revealed in Christ we are called to look on One in whom we see, though transfigured with the glory of omnipotence, the lineaments of those earthly rulers who make their will their law and hold themselves exempt from all that limits the exercise of that will. The potter and the clay ! Is not that parable the germ of all that is most oppressive in the "terrible decree" of Calvinism ? Does it not justify the Moslem's acceptance of the will of Allah as a destiny which he cannot understand, but to which he must perforce submit ? Is not this the last word of the apostle, even when he is most bent on vindicating the ways of God to men, in answer to the question which asks now, as Abraham asked of old : "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?" "Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will ?"

I do not purpose entering into the dark and thorny labyrinth into which these questions lead us. We all know, some of us by a sad experience, how easy it is to lose ourselves in its wandering mazes, while we discourse on

"Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute,"

and how deadening to all spiritual life and energy such discussions may become. On the one side men have deceived their souls with the false assurance of an inheritance which they cannot forfeit. On the other they have drifted to the abyss of despair, or to "the recklessness of unclean living, no less perilous than desperation." In the imagined strength of their own freedom they have refused to acknowledge that they owe anything to the electing purpose or grace of God, or have rashly questioned the righteousness of his government, or have taken refuge from this unsoluble enigma, the great riddle of the world and life, in the dreary agnosticism of a philosophy calling itself Positive, or in the yet baser sensualism which takes as its law of life, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die ;" "Let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they are withered ;" "Money ! money ! money ! honestly, if we can ; but money anyhow, that we may take our

ease and be merry." We all know how one or other of these phases of thought has taken possession of our own souls, or of the souls of others; how they have often succeeded one another as we trace our own spiritual oscillations. It is well for us, often the only pathway of safety, when we turn back from the problems of the universe as from things too high for us, and take refuge in the simple facts of conscience and of duty, in the endeavour, while we refrain our soul and keep it low, to do with our might whatever our hand findeth to do. Work—true, honest, upright work, *that* cannot be wrong whatever may be the ultimate explanation of the things that are now hid from us. We must be content to accept the fact that our theories of the world embrace but half the truth. As with those products of the loom which, as we see them in one light, are bright and radiant in their golden lustre, with fair patterns distinctly wrought into their texture, while, as we change our point of view, the lines are dark and sombre, and the design marred and lost in the prevailing gloom, so is it with the world in which we live. The theories of man's freedom, or of an evolution working blindly, or of an all-controlling Providence, or of a fixed fate seem, each of them, clear and tenable while our thoughts dwell on it exclusively; but each in turn does but present us with a part, and not the whole, of that which a higher intelligence than our's would see to be the true answer to our questionings. We cannot solve the mystery of the beginning of evil in the world, or of its final issues, and must learn, strange as the paradox may seem, to hold in practical union the half-truths which reason cannot theoretically reconcile into a harmonious system.

It is, therefore, no part of my present purpose to enter upon these dark and unprofitable questions on the grounds of abstract reasoning. But we may, I believe, without risk and with some hope of profit, track out the limits which the wise of heart, taught by the Spirit of Truth, have thrown out as tending to assure our hearts and to strengthen our wavering faith. And among those hints this parable of the Potter and the Clay may well claim its place as at once the most conspicuous and the most suggestive. We shall do well to trace its history and to note its bearings. Does it really teach what men have imagined that it taught—the powerlessness of man and the arbitrary sovereignty of God? or does it lead us to acknowledge a

wisdom and righteousness and mercy in the history of men and nations? Does it simply crush us to the ground with the sense of our own impotence? or does it rightly take its place in that noble argument which makes the Epistle to the Romans, more than any other part of Scripture, a true Theodicæa, a vindication of the ways of God to man?

Let us, then, track that similitude from the time when it first presented itself to the mind of a living man, himself also taught of God, as presenting an analogy to what he saw passing round him in the history of the world. It was in a dark and troublous time that the Prophet Jeremiah was called to do his work. He had fallen on evil tongues and evil days, and his work seemed a failure. He turned in, passionate complaint to the Lord, who had called him to that work, and in the bitterness of his soul gave utterance to the rash words, "Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived." Kings, priests, people, were drifting blindly to their destruction. The purpose and promises of Jehovah to his people Israel seemed to fail utterly. It was in this mood that there came to him an inner prompting in which, then or afterwards, he recognized "the word of the Lord." Acting on that impulse he left the Temple and the city, and went out alone into the valley of Hinnom, where he saw the potter at work moulding the clay of the valley into form and fashioning it according to his purpose. The artist-worker had, when he began his task, a design or pattern in his mind, which the observer knew not. That lump which he had taken shapeless into his hands might be for honour or dishonour; a vessel for a king's table, a vase for fruit or flowers, a basin in which men might wash their hands or feet. The prophet looked and saw that here too there was apparent failure. "The vessel that he wrought was marred in the hands of the potter." The clay did not take the shape; there was some hidden defect that seemed to resist the plastic guidance of wheel and hand. The prophet stood and gazed—was beginning, it may be, to blame the potter as wanting in his art, when he looked again and saw what followed. "So he returned, and made it another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." Skill was seen there in its highest form—not baffled by seeming or even real failure—triumphing over difficulties. And then by one of those flashes of insight which the world calls genius, but which we recognize as inspiration, he was taught

to read the meaning of the parable. "Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine, O house of Israel." Did the thought which thus rushed in on his soul crush it as with the sense of a destiny arbitrary, supreme, not necessarily righteous, against which men struggled in vain, and in whose hands they had no freedom and therefore no responsibility? Not so. Far otherwise than that. To him that which he saw was a parable of wisdom and of love, working patiently and slowly; the groundwork of a call to repentance and conversion. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." That thought, we must believe, was one that brought light and hope into the thick darkness in which the prophet's soul had before been wrapt. It had as its necessary complement that which, dealing with the case of seeming failure, frustrating the purpose of the Divine Artificer, involves what seems a change of another kind in that purpose. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them." But this, no less than the other, shewed that what seemed to the prophet the one great lesson taught by the parable of the Potter and the Clay was not that the decrees of God are irreversible, but that man is free to choose, and that though God may be constrained to punish He delights rather to forgive.

And the reason of this was that he had not forgotten, as we too often do when we interpret the parables of nature or of human life placed before us by the Divine Teacher, or coming to the minds of those who see that all things are double, one against another, that parables and analogies are, for the most part, suggestive and not exhaustive. Facts over-ride what seem to be the logical conclusions from them. Take, for example, the parable of the Sower, and might we not infer from what it tells us of the seed that fell on the wayside, or on the thin surface-soil that overlay the rock, or among the thorns, that the preaching of the Word of Life did but develop natural tendencies, and leave

men practically as it found them? The parable offers an explanation of the partial failure of the Gospel of the Kingdom based upon that assumption. But we do not read the lesson rightly unless we remember that the ground *can be changed*, that it is the work of all teachers, educators, rulers of mankind, to endeavour to effect the change from bad to good. We are to break up the fallow ground, to tear up the thorns, to deepen the layer of earth, and to bring it under the sweet influences of God's sun and of the rain and dew from heaven. Even the seed itself, the Word of Life coming from the lips of the Preacher of righteousness, brings with it, as the experience of Christendom has shewn, at once in the history of nations and the record of individual lives, a strange transforming and fertilizing power, giving to the ground on which it falls a capacity which it had not before. Or think, again, of the Wheat and Tares : how easy is it, if we dwell only on the framework of the parable, to draw from it the conclusion that all men, even within the visible Church of Christ, are from first to last either children of God or children of the wicked one, that all that it teaches us is to restrain our impulse to thrust out heretics and evildoers, and to let both grow together until the harvest, when each shall receive according to his works. It is not till we go below the surface, and interpret the special teaching of the parable by the analogy of faith, that we see that there is another reason for that forbearance than the risk that we, in our hot eagerness and zeal to root out the tares, should tear up the wheat with them. There is the deeper truth that *the tares may become the wheat*, that every actual sinner is a possible saint of God, that it is the work of all true servants of Christ to be fellow-workers with Him in effecting that transformation.

So it was with the prophet. When he passed from the potter and his wheel to the operations of the great Work-Master, as seen in the history of nations, he saw in the vessels that were being moulded, as on the wheel of Providence, no masses of dead inert matter. Each was, as it were, instinct with a self-determining power, which either yielded to or resisted the plastic workings of the potter's hand. The urn or vase designed for kingly uses refused its high calling, and chose another and less seemly shape. The Supreme Artificer, who had determined in the history of mankind the times before-appointed and the

bounds of men's habitations, had, for example, called Israel to be the pattern of a righteous people, the witness of Truth to the nations, a kingdom of priests, the first-fruits of humanity. That purpose had been frustrated. Israel had refused that calling, had chosen to be as the nations round it in its worship, its sensuality, its greed of gain, the tyranny of its oppressors. It had, therefore, to be brought under another discipline, fitted for another work: "He returned, and made it another vessel." The pressure of the potter's hand was to be harder, and the vessel was to be fashioned for less noble uses. Shame and suffering and exile—their land left desolate, and they themselves weeping by the waters of Babylon—this was the process to which they were now called on to submit. But at any moment in the process, repentance, acceptance, submission might modify its character and its issues. The fixed unity of the purpose of the skilled worker would shew itself in what would seem at first the ever-varying changes of a shifting will.

True it was that a little later on in the prophet's work he carried the teaching of the parable one step further, to a more terrible conclusion. This time it was not enough to point to the potter's patient skill. The word of the Lord came to him again, "Go and get a potter's earthen bottle, and take of the ancients of the people and of the ancients of the priests, and go forth unto the valley of the son of Hinnom" (Jer. xix. 1), and there in their sight he was to break the bottle as a witness that, in one sense, the day of grace was over, that something had been forfeited which now could never be regained. Israel and Judah had been unfaithful to the ideal of their national existence. Never again was that form of their existence to be renewed. Never again were a king and princes to sit upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses. The form and the uses of the potter's vessel were to be altered altogether. But not for that was the purpose of God frustrated. The people still had a calling and election. They were still to be witnesses to the nations, stewards of the treasure of an eternal Truth. In that thought the prophet's heart found hope and comfort. He could accept the doom of exile and shame for himself and for his people, because he looked beyond it to that re-moulded life. Those who, instead of accepting it, were rebelling and resisting, questioning the wisdom or

the righteousness of God, were as the thing formed saying to Him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

The age in which St. Paul lived was like that of Jeremiah, a dark and troublous time for one whose heart was with his brethren, the children of Abraham according to the flesh. Once again the potter was fashioning the clay to high and noble uses. His people might have taken their place as the first-fruits of the Church of Christ, which was to include the nations of the redeemed, as the prophets and teachers of mankind. He started, as it were, with the hope that it would be so. "To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile," was the law of all his work. But here also there was apparent failure. Blindness, hardness, unbelief, these marred the shape of the vessels made to honour. Did he for that cease to believe in the righteousness and faithfulness of God? Did he see no loving purpose behind the seeming severity? No, the vessel would be made for what men held dishonour—exile lasting through centuries, dispersion over all the world, lives that were worn down with bondage—but all this was in his eyes but the preparation and discipline for the far-off future, fitting them in the end for nobler uses. The gifts and calling of God were without repentance, and the wisdom of the great Work-Master would then be made manifest when He who had concluded all in sin and unbelief should at last have mercy upon all. Did any Israelite, zealous, impatient, eager to anticipate the purpose of Him who sees the end from the beginning, question yet once more the wisdom or righteousness of God in this discipline, for him the apostle had the answer, "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Hath not the potter power over the clay?"

The history of nations and Churches has through all the ages borne witness of the same truth. Each has had its calling and election. Dimly as it has been given to us to trace the education of mankind, imperfect as is any attempt at the philosophy of History, we can yet see in that history that the maze is not without a plan. Greece and Rome, Eastern or Latin or Teutonic Christendom—each nation or Church, as it becomes a power in the history of mankind, has been partly taking the shape and doing the work which answered to the design and purpose of God, partly thwarting and resisting that purpose. So far as it has been faithful to its calling, so far as the collective unity of its life

has been true to the eternal law of righteousness, it has been a vessel made to honour. Those who see in history, not the chaos in which brute forces are blindly working from confusion to confusion, but the unfolding of a righteous order, can see in part how resistance, unfaithfulness, sensuality, have marred the work,—how Powers that were as the first of nations have had written on them, as it seemed, the sentence passed of old on Amalek, that their latter end should be that they should perish for ever. Spain, in her decrepitude and decay; France, in her alternations of despotism and anarchy; Rome, in the insanity of her claims to dominate over the reason and conscience of mankind—these are instances, to which we cannot close our eyes, of vessels marred in the potter's hands. The great drama on the opening scenes of which we are now gazing with alternations of hope and fear, the collapse and ruin of a nation that has used its power for tyranny and wrong, what is it but the breaking of the potter's vessel? Doubtless, plain and clear as the lesson is, it is not well to dwell upon it in the spirit of national pride or Pharisaic exultation. Each such example of the judgment of the Heavens bids us not to be high-minded, but to fear. We need to remember, as of old, that the doom which seems so far from us may be close at hand, even at our doors, that that which seems ready to fall on this nation or on that, Turk or Christian, Asiatic or European, is not irreversible. "At what time soever," now as in the prophet's days, "a nation shall turn and repent," and struggle over the stepping-stones of its dead self to higher things, there is the beginning of hope. The Potter may return and mould and fashion it, it may be to lowlier service, perhaps even to outward dishonour, but yet, if cleansed from its iniquity, it shall be meet for the Master's use.

I have spoken so far of the bearing of the parable on God's dealings with nations and with Churches. That is obviously what was prominent in the thoughts both of prophet and apostle in their interpretation. But we need not shrink from accepting it as it bears upon the individual life of every child of man, and it is obviously that aspect of its teaching which has weighed most heavily upon the minds of men, and often, it would seem, made sad the hearts of the righteous whom God has not made sad. Does it leave room there also for individual freedom and responsibility? Did the inspired teachers think of it as leading men to

repentance and faith and hope, or as stifling every energy under the burden of an inevitable doom? The words in which St. Paul speaks of it might be enough to suggest the true answer to that question. To him even that phase of the parable which seems the darkest and most terrible does but present to man's reverential wonder an instance of the forbearance of God enduring with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. Men, that is, individual men, in the exercise of their fatal gift of freedom, had resisted and thwarted the generous purpose which would have moulded them into chosen instruments—"vessels of election," to use the Scripture phrase—for working out his gracious purpose for them and, through them, for men their brothers. They were fitting themselves for the destruction, the casting away, the breaking of the potter's vessel, which was the necessary issue of that persistent antagonism. But for them too the patience of God was great. For many a long year He had endured with a patience compared with which all human patience is as an irritable harshness. The Potter would fain return and mould and re-mould till the vessel is fit for some use, high or humble, in the great house of which. He is the Supreme Head. By the discipline of life, by warnings and reproofs, by failures and disappointments, by prosperity and success, by sickness and by health, by varying work and ever-fresh opportunities, He is educating men and leading them to know and to do his will. Who does not feel in his calmer and clearer moments that this is the true account of the past chances and changes of his life? True, there is a point at which all such questionings reach their limit. The words, "Hath not the potter power over the clay?"—power to determine the form of the vessel into which it is to be fashioned and the uses, honourable or, as men count them, dishonourable, to which they are to be applied—retain their force. Why a man is born into the world in this country or in that, one the heir of the culture and the creed of European Christendom and another in the dim twilight of barbaric heathenism;—why one man is in no peril of death, but is lusty and strong, and another goes softly all his days in the bitterness of his soul;—why one child is the light and joy of a happy home, and another grows up as the wastrel Arab of the streets;—why some are endowed with, the gifts of knowledge and the far-reaching intellect which stretches before and after, and others are ignorant of the glorious

gains of time ;—why some inherit the dangers of riches and others those of poverty ;—these are questions which we cannot answer. The secret of that infinite diversity lies behind the veil which no man has as yet lifted. We can but answer in words which are but a development of the thoughts which the parable of the Potter and the Clay suggests, “ In a great house there are vessels not only of silver and gold, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honour and some to dishonour.”¹ Some seem to have no higher calling than to be tillers of the soil, delvers in the mine, toilers at the oar. “ Their lot is to maintain the state of the world, and all their desire is in the work of their craft. Without these cannot a city be inhabited ;”² but “ they shall not be sought for in public counsel, nor sit high in the congregation.” Others take their place among the wise of heart, the rulers of men, leaving behind them a name and fame which the world will not willingly let die. In the language of another parable, to one is given five pounds, to another two, and to another one—to each according to his several ability. But the thought that sustains us beneath the burden of these weary questions is that the Judge of all the earth shall assuredly do right. Men’s opportunities are the measure of their responsibilities. “ To whom men have committed much of him will they ask the more.” The bitter murmur and passionate complaint are checked by the old words, “ Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ?” The poorest and the humblest may find comfort in the thought that if his work be done faithfully and truly, if he sees in the gifts which he has received, and the outward circumstances of his life, and the work to which they lead him, but the tokens of the purpose of the great Designer, he, too, yielding himself as clay to the hands of the potter, may become in the least honoured work, a vessel of election. What is required in such a vessel when formed or fashioned is, above all, that it should be clean and whole, free

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 20.

² Eccles. xxxvii. 32, 33. The chapter which thus draws the broad line of demarcation between the toilers and the thinkers of the world contains a graphic description of the labour now before us, which it may be well to quote : “ So doth the potter sitting at his work, and turning the wheel about with his feet, who is always carefully set at his work, and maketh all his work by number. He fashioneth the clay with his arm, and boweth down his strength before his feet ; he applieth himself to lead it over ; and he is diligent to make clean the furnace.”

from the taint that defiles, from the flaws that mar the completeness of form or the efficiency of use. The last lesson of the parable is found in the words, full of hope, if also full of warning. "If a man cleanse himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work."¹ The seeming poverty of material, or uncomeliness of form, or lowliness of use, is no real dishonour. The vessel of the potter's clay, thus fashioned and thus cleansed, is precious as the golden chalice, rich with gems, and consecrated for service in the temple of the great King. The work of each soul of man is to seek this consecration, to flee the youthful lusts, the low ambitions, the inner baseness, which desecrate and debase. Our comfort is, that in so striving, we are fellow-workers with the great Work-Master. Our prayer to Him may well be that He will not despise what his own hands have made. I know not in what better or nobler words that prayer can clothe itself than those in which a poet of our own time has summed up the teaching of the parable of the Potter and the Clay :

"So take and use Thy work,
Amend what faults may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim.
My times are in Thy hand,
Perfect the cup as planned,
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same."²

E. H. PLUMPTRE.

¹ 2 Tim. ii. 21.

² Robert Browning, "Rabbi Ben-Ezra."

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